

Publick Sorrov.

A Remedy for ENGLANDS MALADY.

Being an Explanation of the four-
teenth verse of the first Chapter
of the Prophet *Joel*.

By *Ellis Weycoe*, M. A.

Weep for your selves, Luke 23. 28.

*Be Afflicted, and Mourne, and Weepe, let
your Laughter be turned into Mourning, and
your Joy into Heaviness, James 4. 9.*

*Blessed are they that Mourne, for they
shall be Comforted, Matth. 5. 4.*

GATESHEAD.

Printed by *Stephen Bulkeley*, 1657.

3 47 / 13

1185





To his very much beloved Friends and Neighbours, the Inhabitants of the Towne of Bridlington, and the Key, and to all the Parishioners thereunto belonging, Grace, Mercy, and Peace from God the Father, &c.

Christian and endeared Friends,

Vpon that Edit of the first of January 1655. prohibiting Sequestred and Ejected Ministers from Pulpit, and all other employments (though I verily beleve, that his Highnesse and Councill chiefly aymed at the muzzling of the Mouthes of such turbulent Spirits, and Martiall Ministers, as are no sooner claspt in their Pulpits, but presently Proclaym war, in stead of Preaching Peace; Sedition, in stead of Obedience; and Confusion in stead of Order; without the least intent of prejudice to such as were quiet and peaceable in Israel; and not hearing as yet of any limitation) being (amongst many others) by force thereof, not onely disused from officiating in Publick, but likewise debarred of all wayes and means, through which, by my costly Education, I might have procured some reasonable competency for my selfe, and the many depending wholly upon me; I have had leisure enough to bewaile both mine own and others miseries. And after not a few melancholy Cogitations, finding my selfe an Achan, a great troubler of this poor Church and People; and seeing mine, as much (if not far more) then others sins to be the onely cause of all our woes; I set my selfe to find out some Remedy for distressed

A 2

Englands

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Englands Melady : Hereupon I sometimes Mournefully, yet willingly, sate downe by the Banks of Babylon, there making Sorrow my Soules Solace, finding indeed no greater joy in my heavinesse, then in Sorrow for sin : Sometimes I walked abroad into the pleasant Meadows, Greene Fields, and fresh Pastures of holy Scriptures, there to seek and finde some soure Hearbes, and of the tarest relish, and some Flowers of the darkest hew, and strongest scent, that their sad complexion might best please the weeping Eyes of a pensive Heart, and their bitter smell might best affect the distasted Pallat of a sin sick-sorrowfull Soule. Of both which sorts, I found the Psalmes, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Nehemiah, and the Lamentaions of Jeremy well stored, and thicke Planted; and gathering some of them, such as I thought for my purpose. I then took a turne into the delightfull Gardens of holy Writ, to seek out some sweet flowers of comfort; and finding plenty, I cropt some few, to mix with the other, that the ones sweetnesse, might smother alay the others tartnesse. And though thus full furnisht, yet distrusting my own Skill and Judgement in so great a Cure of such a dangerous and deadly Disease; I went to View the Receipts of far more Able, wise, and Learned spirituall Physitians, and from them extracted the best directions; which together, with my own weake Meditations, I mixt with all the other Ingredients; and having first washed them well in the waters of Marah, have of all these severals or simples, made up such a Compound, as I hope will be a good Preservative against the Infectious poyson of sin, and a good Salve for Englands present Sore. And upon some thoughts, that if this Medicine were good for my selfe, it might, by Gods blessing, be comfortable to others also: Considering also, that a Book perhaps may speake, when an Author may not; not
harbouring

The Epistle Dedicatory.

harbouring the least thoughts of Vain-glory, or Popular Applause; I resolved with my selfe to make my Meditations Publick, like our Sorrows. And not knowing how to doe it any other way, I took this occasion of manifesting my dearest affections, and best wishes, to you, amongst whom I had my first Breathing; and have lived so long, as that none, better then your selves, are able to give evidence both of my former conversation, and present condition. It may be (meane and plain as it is) it may conduce to the benefit of many; but my principall intent in it, was the zeale I have to your Soules, the salvation of which, I shall ever most heartily pray for. Accept therefore I beseech you of these my poor Endeavours, and make use of this Physick I have prepared for you: But give me leave to give you some Directions in the taking of it; You must Chew it, Swallow it, and Digest it, not throwing it up so soon as you have received it, for then it will doe you no good; but if you can keep it in the Stomack of your Soules, you will find it to be such a Violent Purge, and working Vomit, as will force you to Cast or Spue up all the Poyson of Sin. If you think it be too much to swallow all at once, you may divide it, as you please, into severall Potions; yet, I think, the whole will be but three easie Mornings Draughts for your Soules; however, leave it not in the halfe, though you take longer time to Drink and Digest it all, and then I doubt not, but as it hath been to me, so it may be to you that takes it, somewhat usefull and helpfull; And if any of you find ease, or get help by this Publick Sorrow, the onely Physick for a sin burthened Soule; then Praise God, and Pray for,

The unworthy Servant of the Lord,

Ellis Weycoe.

To the Sin-sick Reader.

Mat. 9. 12.

They that be whole, saith our Saviour, need not a Physician, but they that are sicke. This Physick I have here prepared for thee, is made up of bitter Portions, and sowre Druggs; which, taken according to the Direction in the *Epistle Dedicatory*, will Purge corrupt Humours, scoure away the filthinesse of sin, and bring health and happinesse to thy sin-sick soule. The severall Ingredients at the first, I intermixed and framed into this Compound onely for my own use, and have had from them the Operation I desired; namely, they have made many irksome houres the lesse tedious to me, and much heavinesse to sit a great while the lighter upon me: It was far from my thoughts ever to trouble the too much oppressed Presse, I am so conscious of my owne weaknesse, as I cannot but blush in secret, that ever I was prevailed with to make my selfe thus open. I know not how my scribled Papers chanced to come to the view of some Persons of Judgement, by whom I have been not intreated onely, but very much importuned also, to make this *Treatise* like the title of it, *Publick*. They set upon me with some Arguments which I could not gain-say: truth is, they have overcome me, and made me at last (though most unwillingly) willing to expose my selfe to the Interpretation of this Censorious Age. Good Reader, my *Publick sorrow* hath long layd hid by me in the wombe of obscurity, but is now after nine Moneths delivered to the Light; if it prove fruitfull or usefull to thee or any other, it will be an ample compensation to my poore Labours. That great and good Physician of our Soules, *Christ Jesus* blesse it to thee, is the humble request of his, and in him,

Thy Servant,

Ellis Weycor.

The Contents.

H ow the Church of England ever observed Fasts, and Holy-dayes,	Fol. 3.
The Prince or Governour, may appoint a Fast,	3.
Princes or Governours are to be Obedy in their Com- mands,	3.
Fourre Cautions to be observed in keeping a Fast,	4.
How to keep every day holy-day,	4.
God is never angry but for sin,	6.
Sin is the cause of all misery,	7. 8. 9. 10.
Mourners marked, and thereby preserved,	12.
Soules sorrow,	16.
Better to deale with God by Teares then words,	17.
The Antiquity of Fasting,	20.
Fourre Rules to be observed in Fasting,	22.
who must give to the Poor, how much, in what manner, and to whom they must give,	28.
Christs Schoole, a Schoole for all sorts,	31.
The Kingdom of Christ admits of no distinction,	36.
The best place of Refuge to fly unto in time of warre, or any Calamity,	39.
Five Rules to be observed in Gods publick wor ^{sh} ip and service,	44.
Three Rules that fit us for a right behaviour in Gods House,	46.
	Three

The Contents.

Three Rules to binde us to the good behaviour ; before we come to Heare, at the time of Hearing, and after we have Heard the word, 47.

Our Hearing of the word must be accompanied with foure concurring Circumstances, 54.

Prayer the Art of Arts that adornes a Christian, 56.

Godly sorrow and affliction, the best remedy in any sorrow and affliction, 59.

The greatest affliction which should touch our Hearts, is the Churches affliction, 66.

We must never make an end of Mourning, till God make an end of Afflicting, 71. 72.

No distresse whatsoever can binder Gods people from praying, 78.

The Knowledge of Gods power and mercy, is the onely cause of bringing Christians into his presence, and of moving them to call upon him in their miseries. 83.

Men can never truly seek God by Prayer, till they know, understand, and apply his Name, 83. 84.

We must not onely Pray, but Cry, 94.

Good Suiters alwayes good Speeders, 44. 95. 100.

Three Rules to be observed if we expect help from God in distresse, 96. 97.

Joel



Joel 1. Chap. 14. Verse.

Sanctifie a Fast, call a solemne Assembly, gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land into the House of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.

THe wisest Preacher of a mortall Man, and of immortal memory that ever was, or shall be inspired with the spirit of God, saith, *That there is a time to Weep as well as to Laugh, a time to Mourn as well as to Dance:* And surely, seeing every Man and Woman under their own Vines and Figtrees, have a long time satiated themselves with Laughing and Dancing, or making merry with their Friends; doubtlesse now, these sad and cloudy times are the times that call for *Weeping and Mourning, for Baldnesse and girding with sackcloth.* For hath not God shot divers of his Arrows, and have not some Bullets fallen from his Warning peeces? which Arrows and Bullets, poysoned with the Rebellance, have not many years agoe hit and slain some People, not onely in and about our Mother Cities, but else-where in the spacious Countries. Who perceiveth not how the destroying Angell hath of late unsheathed his Sword, and brandished it over us of this Nation of *England*? Who knows not, how in respect of these unhappy differences amongst us, Warr thundred in our trembling Countries lap, the Sword devoured the *Grace of England*, and became drunk with the Bloud of Natives; The red Horse, with him that sate thereon, to whom was given power to take Peace from the Earth, and a great Sword, still prancing and trampling in our Streets, both at Noon-day and at Midnight? Now though the sinfull Sons and Daughters of men have and still doe lye neverthelesse sleeping in their sensualities, yet, the vigilant Watchmen of our *English Israel*, our late

B

Royall

Prov. 18.
10.

Royall Kings in their severall Reignes and Governments, observing Gods begun Judgements, and further threatned Punishments, usually Proclaimed *Fasts* in the times of common calamity. And his Highnesse, (under whose protection and government we now live) hath set a part many dayes of Humiliation, appointing us a place of refuge, or sacred Sanctuary to fly unto, that strong *Tower*, that right *Arke*, or little *Zoar*, unto which the righteous run, and are preserved, even unto the House of the Lord our God, carried thither with the feet of Prayer; there, with all fervency, to Pray for the preventing and diverting of Gods further furious hand against us, crying unto the Lord to spare this Land, to spare this People, to spare us from the Sword, to spare us from the Famine, and from all his sore Judgements which our sins most justly have deserved; for which purpose the Trumpet hath been often blown in this our *Sion*, the Fast Proclaimed and the Assembly gathered, according to this of *Joel*, *Sanctifie a Fast, call a solemn Assembly, gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land into the House of the Lord your God, and cry unto the Lord.*

This Fountain might divide it selfe into severall Streames; but waving unnecessary Fractions, I shall confine my Discourse to these two Heads:

1. *A duty enjoyned, Sanctifie a Fast.*

2. *A method, or order prescribed for the solemn performance of it, Call a solemn Assembly, gather the Elders &c.*

Duty en-
joyned.

1. The duty enjoyned, A duty no lesse necessary then seasonable; For, as *St. Augustine* observes, Before the fall there needed but one glorifying of God, that was, *by giving of thanks*; But now since the fall, by reason of our many backslidings, there must be also, *Sacrificium tribulatis cordis*, the Sacrifice of a troubled Spirit, for the mortifying of this flesh of ours, which by being too much pampered by us, hath been so rebellious against God.

I shall passe by the first, *the duty enjoyned, or Fast proclaimed*; my meditations intending to fix upon nothing but that which shall afford fit matter for mourning, though the Proclamation it self being alwayes occasioned either upon begun Judgements, or threatned Punishments, might give just cause to hoise up saile in a Sea of sorrows, but delighting onely in that heart-breaking, and yet well pleasing penitiveness; and therefore hastening to that Ocean of

Corr

Publick Sorrow.

sorrow in the *exit*, or end of the verse, *fighing, sobbing, crying*; I will but salute the *Faſt enjoyed*, and ſtay but a while to bewaile theſe miſerable times into which we are fallen, which being the laſt, muſt needs be the worſt, wherein ſo many are carried away with the ſeverall blaſts of vain Doctrin, from Gods true Religion, to theſe follies and fancies, whereby they doe not onely wound Chriſts myſticall Body, but alſo diſmember it in the Common-weale, making ſo many Faſtions as there are Functions in the Church, ſo many fancie's as men, and as many opinions as fancies; and to that height of impiety ſome are arrived, as that being Chriſts Free-men, they ought not to be ſubject to any, but are ſet free by Chriſt from the obſervation of Faſts or Feaſts appointed by the Prince or Governour, and not ſubmitting to the Government under which they live, will hold faſt their liberty purchaſed by Chriſt, though the appointment of them by the Governour be onely for the aſſembly of Gods people, and that upon ſpeciall occaſions, for the exerciſes of the Word and Prayer, without placing the worſhip of God, or any force of Religion in the obſervation of them, or without any opinion of holineſſe in theſe dayes. more then other dayes. And thus the Church of *England* did ever obſerve Holy-dayes, Faſts, or Feaſts, and no otherwiſe; and yet did not foregoe their liberty purchaſed by Chriſt. I might give way to my Diſcourſe in this, and enlarge it to a Volume, but I had rather mourn for this kind of people (the onely troublers of our *English Iſrael*) then meddle with them: But to you that are peaceable in *Iſrael*, willingly ſubmitting your ſelves to the Government under which God hath placed you, and that for Conſcience ſake; know you, that it is lawfull for the Dominator or Governour to appoint a Faſt, or day of Humiliation, and you are bound to obey.

For the lawfullneſſe of their Ediſts, I need not ſtand at all upon it; it hath ever been uſed by Princes of all Ages, for which I might produce clouds of witneſſes, but ſearch you the Scriptures, and trace all the Kings.

For our obedience to their commands, know, that we are bound to obey them in their abſolute commands ſo far forth as they are warranted by the Word of God: And for this, let that precept of *St. Paul* ſerve for all; *Let every ſoule be ſubject to the higher Pow-*

Rom. 13. 1
1 Pet. 2.
13. 14

Publick Sorrow.

Rom. 13.

Your selves to all manner of Ordinance of man, for the Lord sake, whether it be unto the King, as unto the Superior; or unto Governours, as unto them that are sent of him: So that people that obey not the wholesome Laws of the Magistrate, sin greatly; and if any refuse to be ordered by them, they resist the Ordinance of God, and are specially threatned, that they shall receive to themselves damnation.

And thus have I shewed you, That Princes, or Governours may in the time of War, or other Judgement, *enjoyne us a Fast, and Proclaime a solemn assembly*, to the end we may testifie our Humiliation, and better attend on the exercises of the Word and Prayer, and that we are to obey them; but withall, in keeping of a Fast, let these cautions be observed.

1. That our Fasting be voyd of superstition, and that we place no worship of God in it, but hold it onely as an help to further us in the duties of Religion.

2. That we have no opinion of merit by it, that thereby we merit forgiveness of sins, increase of grace, or the like.

3. That we hold it not of absolute necessity.

4. Lastly, That it be without breach of the rule of charity, either hurting our selves, or making us thereby unfit for good duties, or giving offence to others, such as are weak in knowledge, causing them to call our Christian liberty into question; rather Informing them, that the Magistrate hath power to enjoin, and we are bound to obey, who by his Authority doth not take away the use of the things we abstain from, but onely orders and moderates the same.

The like may be said for Feasts, dayes of Thanksgiving, or holy dayes; but I passe them: onely I could wish, That every one of you would keep every day a Christian Fast, even every day holy day, which you may doe, by purposing every day to avoyd all and every sin, and by setting your selves every houre of the day in the sight of God, and walking, as before him, carefully and conscionably in all good duties; and so doing you shall keep a good Conscience, and that the wise man tells us, *is a continual feast*, even every day holy day.

Prov. 15.
35.

And now being fully resolved, That the King or Governour may Lawfully enjoyn us a Publick Fast in the time of extremity, or any common calamity, whereby we may testifie our Humiliation without the least opinion of meriting forgiveness of our sins (the cause of all our miseries) and that he may Proclaime a solemn assembly

bly

bly; and that we are to obey, not with any opinion of holiness in the time; but that the appointed day is for the assembly and holy convocation of Gods people, for the exercise of the Word and Prayer. Let us all then, at all times, especially upon these dayes of Humiliation set a part, *turne unto the Lord our God, with fasting, weeping, and mourning, and cry unto the Lord to spare this Nation, and command his destroying Angel to sheath his Sword, and cease from punishing, that there may be no more complaining, no more leading into captivity. Let us implore Gods gracious power, to withdraw his angry moved hand against us; and let us beg of the God of mercy, to stay his further dreadful vengeance, and threatened punishments, from any further displaying horreur throughout all our Nation. And for that purpose. Let us run to our place of refuge, the House of the Lord, upon the feet of Prayer, and there cry unto the Lord to spare this Land, to spare this People, to spare us from the Sword, &c.*

The next is, *the occasion, or cause of this Fast*, and that, if you please to look into the verses foregoing the Text, you will find to be a great Plague of Famine for the space of no lesse then foure years; *Their field wasted, the Lord mourning, their corne destroyed, their vines dried up, their oyle decayed, their harvest perished, all the trees of the field withered, and joy withered away from the Sons of Aken.* So that just cause had they to lament, and howle, and lye in sackcloth and ashes; nay, in dust and ashes. But should I prosecute my weak apprehensions in this, I should but draw the Treatise beyond a just extent: Let it suffice, That their Land was rufeted with a bloodlesse Famine, a dreary punishment, Heavens curse, and the engine of destruction; which doth bring terror to mortals, death to all things; and therefore good cause had they, to call a sole assembly, to sanctifie a Fast, to gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land into the house of the Lord their God, and there cry unto the Lord.

And as theirs was Famine; so, the cause of our solemn assemblies, or dayes of Humiliation (for some years by-past) hath been Wars, and the worst of Wars, a civill War, our Land unnaturally embroyled in her own blood, and not long agoe, could have presented you even in the middest of her own bowels, with whole heaps of slain: This Land of England, that for many Ages continued the happiest Nation on the habitable Earth, under the grac-

The occasion, or cause of the fast.
Ver. 20.
11. 12. 13.

our Government of many famous Princes; and we of our times cannot deny, but we have enjoyed the highest blessings that either Heaven could give, or the Earth receive, *the fruition of the Gospel*, which then sealed a firme Peace, and which Peace occasioned a full plenty to us, a then thriving, and I think, a well-contented people; insomuch, that this Land then became the *Earths Paradise*, and the *Worlds Wonder*, or rather, *Envy*; Now alas! the Nurcery of all *Scits*, and of late years, *the Stage of Blood, the Theatre of Warre*, having had her Peace violated, her Plenty wasted, and her People discontented; and though now (thanks be to God) we heare not the ratling of Drums, the clashing of Armour, the neighing of Horses, the sounding of Trumpets, the thundring of Guns, or the roaring of Cannons; yet it is to be feared, the Lord is still up in Arms against us, his hand is stretched out still; else, what means these reports of Wars, vast slaughters, and murders on the Seas? our Merchants and Traders spoyled their Goods Plundered, their Ships burnt, sunk, or taken; and themselves in their own defence, either slain, or carried away Captives: So that all this little while, or few years we seemed to enjoy a Peace, every man again satiating himself under his own vine and fig tree, was so far from a true Peace with God; as that rather, it seems it was but a Truce for a time, (God expecting our amendment) which being expired, and we still continuing in our sins, the Lord is again up in Arms for further revenge against us. And what is the reason that the Lord is still thus incensed against this Land, and people of *England*? Surely it is against the nature of God to be continually chiding, and scourging, and whipping, and wounding; for the Lord our God hath no other Bowels, then the Bowels of compassion; no other Riches, then the riches of his mercy; nay, the unlimited extent of Gods gracious mercy and goodness, is beyond all imaginable proportions. How coms then his favours to be turned into frownes, his mercies into displeasures? Why? Surely if you will but trace the Scriptures, you shall never find God angry, but for sin; nor grievously angry, but for grievous sin; so that the sins of this Nation must needs be mounting, towering sins, sins of the highest elevation; and its the height of our sins that hath alwayes brought down the weight of his Judgements upon us; and the cart ropes of our sins, have hurried down his vengeance: So that if we will but reflect upon

upon our selves, we shall find within our selves the cause of all our sufferings, Plagues, punishments, and Woes; our sins being the occasion of all our evils, and the cause of all our miseries, undermining our souls, and drawing destruction after them, and of all things else most hurtfull unto us. St. Paul confirms this, saying, *For this cause many are weak and sick amongst you, and many sleep.* 1 Cor. 11. 3^d. And this was the reason, why the Disciples questioned their Master, saying, *Quis peccavit?* Who did sin, this man, or his Parents? Iobu 9. 2. *Celidonius* was born blind, and our Saviour Christ going out of the Temple, seeking to shun those stones which they intended to throw at him; he cast his eye upon this poor blind man: for the eye of divine pity is ever fixed upon poverty; and it is the privilege of humane misery, to have the eye of divine pity to look down upon it, and to favour the same; so that he healed him at once both in body and soule: The History is no lesse large, then pleasing; you may reade it at your leisures. Now the Disciples having whispered amongst themselves touching this mans misfortune (well knowing that sin was the occasion of all evil) they ask our Saviour. *Quis peccavit?* who sinned? wherein they went wisely to work, in attributing punishment in the generall to sin. One treating of those tears which our Saviour shed at *Lazarus* his death, saith, *That he did not bewaile his Buriall, for he knew how happy he was in being out of the World; but the occasion, sinne; He thought upon Adams Apple, that had been the cause of so much hurt; and this was it that made him to weep; and this his weeping was, as if he should have said, What a deal of sorrow hath this one act of disobedience in him brought upon all Mankind, and consequently upon me, who must bear the burthen of his, and their offence: O sin, how dear wilt thou cost both men, and me!* Trace but the Scripture, and you shall not find any one thing so often repeated there, as, *That sin is the cause of our miseries.* How often doth the word of God paint out the foulness, and grievousness of sin, and the hurt that comes thereby? making sin the very center of all possible infelicity and misfortune that can befall a man. Sin was it that made our Saviour, a Man full of sorrow, when he took upon him the Person of an Offender, turning the most favourable countenance of the most pittifull Father, into frowns and fierce displeasure against his onely begotten, and dearly beloved Sonne, discharging upon him the tempest

tempest of his wrath, and made him, of all other men, the most miserable. So that we may conclude, Sin to be the cause of all our harme, and that all possible ill that can be imagined, is to be reduced unto it, as to its Center. Make a muster of all the enemies of man, as *Death, the Devil, the World, and the Flesh*, and not any one of them; nay, not all of them together, have the least power to hurt us, without sin; And therefore in our Lords Prayer, silencing all other our enemies; onely we beg of God, *that he would free us from sin. But deliver us from evil*; which, although some doe understand it to be spoken of the Devil; yet (as *St. Aug.* saith) *He can but barke, he cannot bite, onely Sin is able to doe both.* And *Anselme* saith, *That he had rather fry without sin in the flames of Hell, then with sin enjoy Heaven.* He might well say so in regard of Hell; for although that one drop of the water of Paradise might be sufficient to quench the flames of Hell; yet shall it not be able to wash away the foulness of sin. The Prophet desired of God, *that he might dye under the Juniper tree*, and yet he would not be rid of his life by *Jezabel*, in regard of the sinne that tyrannicall Queen should have committed; so that, even in his mortall enemy, so great an ill seemeth intollerable to him. And though sin be so great an evil; yet to this so great an hurt, may be added another that is far greater; and that is, *Obstinacy in sin*, never to be cured. *Job* painting out this evil, saith, *That the sinner taketh pleasure therein, and that it seemeth sweet unto him*; it is as pellets of sugar under his tongue; he first delights in the company of sin; then he marries himselfe unto sin, and leaves her not, till death them depart. Thus sin creepeth into the heart by steps and degrees, till at last, it sinks him down to the bottom of Hell: But woe is pronovneed to that sinfull Nation, to that people that are laden with iniquity; *Wee unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin, as with cart ropes.* For God is a severe punisher of sin and his wrath fails not to come and seize on those that sow pillows underneath their sins. So *St. Paul*, *Let no man deceive you with vain words, for, for such things commeth the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.* Was it not sin that brought the curse upon *Adam*, and all his Posterity? his Apple proves his poyson. *Saul* for his disobedience, was turned out of his Kingdom, What the ruine and destruction of Countreies, and Cities, but the sinne

1 Kings
19. 4.

Isays 18.

Ephes. 5. 6

1 Sam.
23. 28.

Hubbick Sorrow.

the People? *Dauids sins, and his Pride*, was the death of *seventy thousand* in an instant; there the people perisheth for the sin of the Prince. I could tell you of a Prince that perished for the sins of the people, whose like was no King before him. neither after him arose there any like him: You may find him your selves. *Like unto him was there no King before him, that turned to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soule, and with all his might, according to all the Law of Moses, neither after him arose there any like him.* Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fiercenesse of his wrath, *where with he was angry against Judah &c. Joliah a good King, one, whose like was not before him; Joliah who did that which was right in the sight of the Lord; yet Joliah must be slain.* Thus you see when iniquity hath playd her part, vengeance will leape upon the stage. What was the reason why Gods hand was stretched over this Land, why the Sword devoured, and the people perished; but the *sins* of the Nation? And was there ever more sinning, or ever lesse remorse for sin? What is this world but the region of *sin*, a Sea of filthinesse; and whilst men are bewitched with the delight thereof, how, like Swine doe they wallow in the filthy mire and puddle of their sins? It may be their bodies are curiously deckt, and shining; but alas, they have nasty and abominable soules. Is not our Land fill full of *Achans, looking upon the Wedge of Gold, or Babylonish Garment*? How is the beauty of *Bathsheba* able to entice the greatest number? *Gebazi* will still post after *Naaman* for rich presents; but the *leprosie* follows him close at his heels, vengeance attends him neer. Was there ever more Drinking, Swearing, Stealing, Lying, Envyng &c. and since our *sins* thus cry for vengeance, what wonder is it that the Lord is fill up in arms againt us? O then put away your swinish drunkenesse, your prophane swearing, your brutish fleshlinesse, your devilish lying and deceiving, your hellish covetousnesse, your savage cruelty, and all your other notorieties; and frame the whole course of your lives according to the rules of Temperance, Chastity, Truth, Righteousnesse, and holinesse; and so though our soules be yet all stained with *sinne*, they may in time become cleerer and whiter then *snow*. Let as all, with a spirituall eye, behold the things of the world separate from their seeming beauty, and so we shall not be bewitcht therewith. Let us consider *Gold and Silver*, not as glistering and shining, but as drosse and dung;

dung; yea, as poisonous, through a curse incorporated herewithall, if our hearts be infected with the love thereof, or by any unlawful means we doe seek after it; Let us consider the beauty of the fairest woman, as vanity; or as a piece of painted clay; or as a stale set for the taking of silly fooles: And lastly, Let us consider all other pleasing things, as Drinking, Banqueting, Gaming, Playing &c. as the very stinging of a Scorpion, which giveth incredible delight for the present, but is by and by turned into tormenting and deadly pangs, till the man thus stung, perisheth. And therefore since *sin* is thus hurtfull, let it be as hatefull unto us, and let us hereafter strive as resolutely against *sin*, as we have formerly served cheerfully under it. Let us hate all *sins*, of all sorts, and keep our selves from all spot of *sin*; And with St. Paul, *Abstaine from all appearance of evil*. And with Jude, *Hate the very garments spotted with the flesh*. In a word, Let us avoyd all *sins*, and have nothing to doe with these filthy in nates, that are dayly plotting and contriving to set the whole tenement on fire, and are good for nothing, but to bring rottenness into our bones and bowels. And let us not defer to turn from *sin*, nor delay till the Morning, but take warning by the foolish Virgins, for to morrow (for ought we know) may be the midnight of Christs call, when if we be found wallowing in the mire of our *sins*, and sinking puddles of our iniquities, how can we hope or expect to be taken as associates to so glorious a Bridegroom? And thus having found the cause of our sufferings to be in our selves, let us lament for our *sins*, that have brought upon us a burthen so heavy, the onely way to re-in favour us again with our justly offended God: And for that purpose, I shall endeavour my selfe to the utmost of my skill, to clothe every one of you with a livery of sorrow, which is the next in the Text, *the assembly called must be solemn*; Call an assembly.

First part
of the meth-
od, or
order.

Lam. 1. 4.

Lam. 1. 2.

Jerusalem the largest map of misery that ever eye beheld, having been often threatned, often battered, and her visitation growing neerer and greater then before; Salem being to become a tributary City, Jerusalem a solitary widow, the wayes of Sion to mourne, her streets to be empty, her gates desolate, her feasts unfrequented, her Priests to sigh, and her Virgins to be afflicted, she her selfe the object of this sight, and subject of this sorrow, to weep day and night, and the tears to run down her cheeks continually, her plagues growing

Publick Sorrow.

¶

growing mighty, because her *sins* were waxen many; many committing them, few mourning for them. The Lord now sendeth *six* Exek. 9. 2. 5. 6. to destroy this City, commanding them to spare none, nor take no pity, but to destroy young and old, Maids, Children, and Women; yet to touch none that had the Marke: and what this marke is, you may see in the fourth verse, *Sighing, sobbing, crying for the abominations, weeping and mourning for the wickednesse that is committed:* there you shall find a publick Notary sent to take the list of mourners, their sorrow is their safety, their lamentation the cause of their preservation; for, for our comforts, mercy hath her lodgings taken up in every Town, in every City, in every Country; be Gods judgements never so great, mercy cannot, mercy will not be excluded; the Saints are alwayes priviledged men, they have speciall immunities, an Arke, a Gishen, a Zoar, a City of Refuge shall be ever prepared. *The meek, the mercifull, the Peace-maker,* Mat. 5. 10 to the 12. *the persecuted the poor in spirit, the pure in heart, and those that hunger and thirst for righteousness,* all these shall be blessed; and not onely these, but mourners shall have a part. *The godly may sow in tears but shall reape in joy; thousands shall fall before them, and ten thousands at their right hand, but the plague shall not come nigh them.* Psal. 125. 5.

Our English Sion (while those unhappy differences, and wofull divisions continued amongst us) was like *Ierusalem*, the very map of misery; the Sword devoured, the people perished, our sons butcherd, our young men slain, our Goods plunderd, our Lands sequestred, and our bodies Carived; our plagues then grew mighty, because our sins were waxen many; the most committing them, few mourning for them: and it is still to be feared, though we have thus sinned, and have thus been punished, that there was never more sinning, nor never lesse remorse for sin; and if againe the Lord should still be incensed, and up in arms against us; what strength were there in us (who are but stubble) to stand before such a consuming Fire: And therefore to prevent Gods further revenge, and threatned punishments, since you have seen in *Exekiel*, that tears are the preservatives of the living (for not a sigh is sent out, but is heard in Heaven, not a teare but is kept nor a groane, but it comes before God) let us sigh and cry for all the abominations of the times; let us weep for the sins of the Nation,

let us lament for our sins, the cause of all our sufferings, and woe; let sorrow now cloath us, and mourning cloud us; let our Fore-heads be marked with a down-right solemn mourning; the Assembly called must be solemn, *Call a solemn Assembly.*

The word *solemn*, which is as much as *serious, sad, and heavy*, methinks may well contain furniture for the times of mourning, and having never more cause, I wish I might robe you with the garment of heaviness: The Text Proclaims a *solemn assembly*, and wills you to mourn for the sins of the Land; the word *solemn*, me thinks, wills us all to lay aside our wanton, superfluous, and supercilious sales of Pride, and put on sables, mourning habiliments, I mean, heavy, sad, and solemn countenances outwardly, to testify our sorrow inwardly; because the Lord hath turn'd his favours into frowns; He that formerly cloathed us with Beauty, did again cloath us with Leprosie; He that formerly cloathed us with Health and Happinesse, did again, in stead of a Garment, give us a Rente, and plagued us with the Sword, and other deadly poisonous, and infectious Diseases.

Will you look a little into the rising of a Wardrobe in *Isaiah*, the Inventory you will find taken in the third chapter, from the 18. ver. to the end of the 23. *The bravery of their ornaments, and chains, and bracelets, and mufflers, and bonnets, and tablets, and earrings, and rings, and ornaments of the legs; and changeable suits of apparell, and mantles, and wimples, and crisping pins, and glasses, and boots, &c.* But the destruction of all this Feminine Furniture, you shall find in the next verses, from the 24. to the end. *It shall come to passe, that in stead of a sweet smell, there shall be a stink; in stead of a girdle, a rent; in stead of well set haire, baldnesse; and in stead of a stomacher, a girding with sackcloth; and burning in stead of beauty. The gates shall lament and mourn.*

The story sheweth what our state was (God grant we have not cause again to say, is) for, so we sinned, so we were plagued; and, me thinks, should be sufficient to stir up all the powers, and passions of sorrow in every one of us; this, me thinks, should be sufficient to set open those side-ens of our souls, that rivers of tears may flow from our heart-breaking, yet well-pleasing pensiveness; for the nature of griefe doth utterly exile all objects of pleasure; and when true sorrow sits her down in a stupid, and a stupendious manner,

manner, and calls for Heaven above to weep with her, the Earth beneath to lament, the Rocks to cleave, the Mountains to Echo forth groans, and the Rivers to run with tears of griefe, the *Israelites* did not more loath, then such sorrow as this doth delight to lie down on the banks of *Babylon*; her Musick is *Lachryma*, or *Doloroso*; she is as *Rachel* in her hard labour, she no sooner conceives, but is delivered; and no sooner delivered, but conceives againe; her throbs and throws almost divide her soule from her selfe, but that her solace being in division, that which killeth others, keepeth her alive; empriness in the bowels, blacknesse on the back, round about spectacles of misery, all circumstances to make sorrow greater then her selfe. Surely our cause was, and is great, *sinne* being the cause of our misery; Let then our tears be many; let us put on the garments of lamentation; let mourning be the mark of our Foreheads; let our hearts be heavy, our bodies faint, our looks sad, and our countenance solemne; and especially upon our Fast dayes, or dayes of Humiliation; let us all goe mourning to the House of the Lord our God, with garments rent, and with sackcloth cloathed; Let the Bride goe forth of her chamber; Let the Priests weep between the Porch and the Altar; Nay, howle ye poor Firr-trees, and let the House of David mourne; and let all the Inhabitants of the land mourne, and weep, and lament; and let our lamentation be as the mourning of *Hadadrimmon* in the Valley of *Megiddo*: And let the land bewaile every Family apart; Let weeping be in all the ends of our Nation, and complaining in the streets of every City, Towne, and Country, crying in the chambers of every house, *Woe, and alas, Woe unto us that we have sinned*. Nay, let all the Orders and Companies of every severall holy convocation throughout this Land of *England*, from the Ruler to the Subject, from the Priest to the People, from the Honourable Councellour to him that draweth Water, from the Men of gray years to the yong Child and Suckling, all plentifully water their Cheeks with Tears. Let sighs be their ordinary Language to our offended God, and cry unto the Lord to spare us from the Sword &c. Our occasion is just, our cause is good, for our *sinns* are great, and our God is incensed, and therefore solemnly expects it, *Call a solemn Assembly*.

Obj. But perhaps some will say, What needs all this ado? what needs

needs this sad behaviour, or solempne Assembly? Doth not God see the heart? and if our hearts can but bleed in sorrow for sin, What need our eyes weep, our tongues lament, our countenances be sad, or our whole behaviour solempne?

Ans. The reason is, (though I might give you severall, yet being in haste, take this one for all, as the maine) Because the Lord our God, is Lord as well of Body, as of Soule; and as well of Soule, as of Body: And therefore in performing any service unto him, he expects, both in his Service and Worship, as in Prayer, our Knees must be bended to him, in signe of our humility; our Eyes, our Hands, our Hearts, and all must be liued up unto him, in signe of our confidence. So in lamenting our *sins*. Let our Eyes weep, our Breasts sigh, our Tongues complain, our whole Body faint, and our Soule languish: see *Mary* weeping, *Peter* weeping, and *Jeremy* never making an end of weeping for the *sins* of his people. Besides, these outward circumstances doe most lively expresse our inward sorrows: Down, down then with all the signes and sales of Vanity, and in true sorrow and humility, humble your selves before God, and cry unto the Lord, saying, praying, *Enter not O Lord into judgement with thy servants, for in thy sight no flesh shall be justified. Keep us O God from the cursed custome of sinning, and from the direfull executioners of vengeance; especially from the Sword, Good Lord deliver us.*

Call a solempne Assembly.

It was an ordinary custome in any common calamity, to rent their garments, put on sackcloth, and mourne in ashes. When the *Israelites* found want of the favour of God, they put off their wonted Garments; as in *Genesis*, in *Amos*, in *Iob*, in *Ionah* may be found: But not to stay at all upon the renting of garments, and cloathing with sackcloth, nor to dwell any longer upon sad behaviours, heavy countenances, or solempne Assemblies; Ile onely with you observe, how that the sorrow and sadnesse of spirit, draws the Body, and all the habiliments of the Body, into the participation and manifestation of griefe; and indeed, how is it possible, that our countenance should testifie gladnesse, when our hearts are heavy. And though I grant, that it is not needfull now to use such shadows in the light of the Gospel, which hath brought us greater liberty: So that whensoever you reade, or heare of weeping,

Weeping, Mourning, Baldnesse, or girding with Sackcloth, repentance by these signes, are but thereby noted out unto us; for Repentance neither consists in sackcloth, nor ashes, nor in any externall thing, but onely in the heart: Those who doe in good earnest Repent, and are displeased with themselves, they hate their *sins*, and are touched to the quick with such a sense and feeling of sorrow, that they abhor and detest themselves, and their life past; and by these outward signes, they give testimony of their inward sorrow; so that humbling themselves before God, they therewithall shew testimony of that displeasure they had conceived in themselves before men; so that indeed, the signes alone are nothing, and the Ceremonies are indifferent; neither have we any Commandement to put on sackcloth, or to pluck off our haire; but the occasion of this Discourse, and naming of these Signes and Ceremonies, is, That I might the better prevaile with you all, willingly, and in good earnest, to put the truth of these signes in practice; namely, to have an unfaigned displeasure with your selves, that you have so displeased your God; confesse your *sins*, your rebellions, your offences, and that with a broken heart, and sorrowfull soule, with an intent to leade a new life; and hereafter, as resolutely to strive against *sin*, as we have formerly served cheerfully under it; for if we judge not our selves worthy of punishment, we cannot come into favour with God: And therefore, as the poor Malefactor bows down his face, and cloath himselfe in vile and base rayment, to move the heart of the Judge; so ought we, to run in all humillity to Gods mercy, in our Lord Jesus Christ, with unfaigned testimonies of our inward Repentance; for conversion begins at the heart: So the Prophet *Joel*, *Rent your hearts, and not your garments*; And therefore to leave the signes, to passe by the ceremonies, and close up all in our mourning weeds, our heavy countenances, sad behaviours, and solemn assemblies; let us be sure to cloath mourning minds, and truly sorrowfull soules. *Augustine* is said to weep a *summer of tears*. *Ambrose*, a *flood of tears*. And I am sure *Jeremy* wishes for a *Fountain of tears*. Certain it is, that none of us can condole so much as we ought, for our *sins* are many, and Gods plagues are mighty; and therefore a deluge of tears were little enough to bear the Ark of our sorrow for our *sins*. I have thus far brought you

Publick

you sorrowing towards this deluge, this sea, this fountaine of sorrow; let us still follow on with paces of lamentation, and sorrowfull remembrances of our *sins*, which have forced the Lord to his Armoury, and to put on the garments of Vengeance against us. And for that purpose, I shall endeavour to robe your selves with mourning garments, and cloath them with the inward sackcloth of sorrow, that your hearts thus rent, and torne to pieces with godly griefe, you may cry more earnestly to the God of mercy, to spare this Land, and not adde to our afflictions, least those that have evill will at our *English Sion*, rejoyce and triumph at our present miseries.

Soul's
sorrow,
or inward
griefe.

Mat. 5.4.

The word *Solemne*, shews that our outward sorrow should rectifie our inward griefe; so that, that which went before, was but the Signe; we now come to the Truth. For our part, we pronounce not renting of cloaths onely, without the putting on of other robes; not so much wishing you to put on sackcloth, as to put on Christ. *Induite*, is the voyce of Scripture; not *Scindite*; *Put on, not Rent off*; the Originall being from that of St. Paul, *Put on the Lord Iesus Christ*; which will be the better performed, if you please to acquaint your selves with this inward mourning; not *Scindite Vestimenta*; but *Scindite Corda*: *Rent not your cloathes but rent your hearts*. And it was not without much reason, that Solomon gives counsell, *To goe to the house of mourning*; *Est enim illis benedictio*, there is performed that blessing which Christ promisseth: A blessing is promised nowhere to mirth, but to *Mourning*: our Saviour hath annexed this reward. And surely, the keeping under of the soule, is much available to all religious and devout offices: and I am sure, there ought to be sorrow in every soul. The whole course of our Saviours life, was spent in solitary sorrow; and doubtlesse, the cause of his sufferings being in us, our *Sins*; we had need, all the dayes of our Pilgrimage, lament for our *sins*, that brought upon our Iesus a burthen so heavy; insomuch, that not *Jeremy* onely, but all Man-kind, may write lamentations: So that, *Non finire, sed semper reservare lachrymas debemus*; We had need never make an end of mourning; never end our sorrows for *Sin*; intermit them we may, but still let us keep our acquaintance with them. That of *Hierome*, confessed is true, *Detestanda sunt illa lachryma, quæ non habet*

modum

modum; Mourning without measure, is a Hell upon Earth: Yet again, *Detestandi sunt qui carent lachrymis*; they are to be detested that have no measure of this heavenly Manna; but happy were we, if we could for ever continue our mourning for *Sinne*, and for the abominations of the Land. God hath already given us the cup of his wrath to drink off, and we have tasted deeply of the cup of his displeasure; we have seen affliction in the rod of indignation: this Land hath presented us with sad spectacles, whole heaps of slain. O how should the remembrance of our late sufferings, set open again the Fountains and Floodgates of sorrow that rivers of tears might flow from our pensive hearts! And if the Lord shall again be incensed, by reason of our *sins*, which are as many, and great as ever; what can we expect, but having already begun to taste of the bitter cup of his wrath and displeasure, he will force us the next time, to drink it down to the dregs? But since that groans and sorrow for *Sin*, is the only way to appease Gods wrath, being far better to deal with him by tears, then by words; and seeing there is no sorrow to that of the soule, though the eyes of the body should wax blind with weeping, Let us shower down rivers of tears, let us plentifully water our cheeks with tears, and sigh, and sob, and weep, and howle, and cry unto the Lord to spare us from the Sword; and let this our lamentation and mourning be *coram*, not *clam*, not onely privately, but openly, especially upon our Fast dayes, or dayes of Humiliation; for as Solemnity expects it, so antiquity prescribes it, the Assembly called must be *solemnac*, *Call a solemn Assembly*.

Obj. But perhaps some will say, God expects not this inward and outward sorrow in his service, this heart-breaking, and body-fainting, our eyes weeping, and our souls languishing; for God wills, that we shew our selves glad and cheerfull when we serve him. Aaron was sad for the death of his Sonnes; and Moses reprehending him, because he had not eaten that day of the Sacrifice; he told him, *Quomodo potui comedere, aut placere Deo in ceremoniis mense lugubri?* How could I eat, or please God in the ceremonies with a mournfull mind? And the text saith, that Moses rested satisfied. The Starrs being called by their Creator to give their light, they are said to doo it, *Cum iudicate, with delight, or cheerfully*.

Levit. 10.
19. 20.

fully. When we serve the Lord, we are bidden to serve him with alacrity: When we fast, the Word bids us, *Anoxur* our heads, *thas* we seem not to men to fast; Unge Caput tuum. But the fast here enjoyed, and the Assembly called, must be solemn. How stands this together, the Scripture bids us both be merry and mourn in the Service of God?

Ans. The answer may well be this, That all our felicity consisting in sorrow for *sinne*, we may very well be merry to see our selves sad: Green Wood being put upon the Fire, both weeps and burns; a deep Valley is cleare on the one side, and cloudy on the other; and mans breast is sad in one part, and joyfull in another. St. Paul specifies two sorts of sorrow; one which grows from God; the other from the World: that gives life, this death. And surely that soule that sorrows for his *Sins*, gives glory unto God. It was commanded in *Leviticus*, that they should celebrate with great solemnity a day of expiation; *Et affligetis animas vestras*; and ye shall afflict your soules. It seems not to sound well, that men should make a great Feast, with afflicting their soules: but for Gods Friend, no Feast ought to be accounted so great, as to offer unto him a sorrowfull and a contrite heart; for as there is nothing more sad then *Sin*, so is there nothing so cheerfull, as to bewaile it. All our dishonest actions are but earnestly layd down for griefe; for Vice is ever an infallible forerunner of wretchednesse; and all our unwarrantable aberrations end at last, either in anguish, or confusion: for *Sin*, on the best condition, brings but sorrow with it; and for *Sinne* without sorrow, is provided Hell. Then down to your Knees, and desire of God that he would give you a tast of the sweetnesse of tears, and your soules once tasting the sweetnesse of tears, will not leave them for a world; for tears are the delight of a penitent; and there is no true joy, but in sorrow for *Sin*. So that all our felicity consisting in sorrow for our *sins*, we may very well be merry, to see our selves sad; and if our sorrow cannot move men to godlinesse, yet it is foreible to move God to mercy: The broken heart, for griefe of *sinne*, and love of righteousness, (however the world despise it) the Lord will not despise it; yea, it is the sacrifice of God, acceptable to him in Christ Jesus.

August. Therefore saith one, *Lachryma sunt cordis sanguis*; Tears are the

the hearts blood: And, *Lachrymarum preces utiliores sunt quam sermonum*; The prayers of teares are far more profitable then those of words. Saint *Chrysostome* sayes, *That our sins are set downe in the table-book of Gods memory, but teares are the sponge which blot them out againe.* In a word, those teares that flow from a broken heart, are that salt brine that will cure your wounds, cheere your souls, ease your consciences, and please your God; they take away all raw humors, and make us savoury meat for the Lord: nay more, they subdne the Invincible, and binds the Omnipotent; so *St. Hierome*, *Oratio Deum lenit, lachryma cogit*; who would not then mourn for sin, and grieve, because they cannot grieve enough? and be earnest with God, in *St. Augustins* expression, *Domine da mihi gratiam lachrymarum*, Lord give me the grace of tears. Then weep for your selves, and weep for others, weep for the sins of the times, for the abominations of the Land, and cry unto the Lord.

The text I took up for your use of purpose in these sad times and God grant it may be as profitable unto you, as I'm sure its fit for these sorrowfull seasons; and though I wish no end to your mourning, yet having led you thus far, sorrowing for your sins, and the sins of the times; let us look back a little upon the Fast enjoyed; which having done, I shall again take you by the hand, and leade you into the house of mourning, the place appointed, *the House of the Lord your God*, and so goe along by the banks of *Babylon*, to the end or exit of the verse, where we shall meet with nothing but *lachryma*, and *suspicia*, Tears, sighs, sobs, sorrows, deplo- *Rubrica* ration, lamentation, fit meditations for our sorrowfull souls; for the end doth hold a correspondency with the beginning, Cry unto the Lord.

Against some Vertues, some Emulators have not stuck to *sauk: se* speak; but against Fasting, no man ever opened his mouth. *Ma. a fast.* *homat* himselfe, never denyed the noblenesse of Fasting; but rather so much commended it, that our Fastings should be ashamed to stand in competition with theirs. And I find such forcible Arguments upon this point, that, me thinks, its but a superfluous labour to advise whether it be to be done, or no. Its but superfluous to advise a man that is sick, to observe a dyet; so its as

needlesse a thing; to command a man to Fast, who from the beginning of the world took a surfet of eating. *Ninive* was saved by Fasting. And *Joel*, me thinks, proposeth the like means, when he cryes unto the people, *Convertimini ad me in jejuniis*, Turne unto me in Fasting, &c.

The antiquity of fasting.

For the antiquity of Fasting, we find, That when the Law of Grace was first published through the world, Fasting was Proclaimed. *John came neither eating nor drinking*. And the first step of our Saviours pennance for our sins, was *Fasting*; in token that our first hurt came by *Eating*. The first Law that God gave man after that he had Created him, was, *That he should not Eat of the tree of Knowledge of good and evill*: wherein two things were to be noted; the one, That man in this so great an happiness, should not forget that he had a Lord and Master. The other had an eye to the repairing of his future fault, and that man might understand that he should in Fasting find a remedy for that hurt which came unto him by Eating. And as a wise Physitian feeling the sick mans Pulse, finds out his ill disposition, and perceiving that his sicknesse grew from that ill ripened Fruit, which even to this day is not yet fully digested, did prescribe this *Recupe*, as a Medicine to cure this our Malady; to the end, that as a man did Eat to sicknesse, so he might Fast to health: And as Gluttony did banish us from Paradise, so Fasting might recall us thither again. So that not Fasting was the cause of all evils, sin, as you have it before, was the cause of all our misery. Now, our not Fasting, I meane not obtaining from the *forbidden Fruit*, was the sin; so that all those evils that are now in the world, are in recompence of that wrong which was done in Paradise unto Fasting. And not onely our first Parents smarted for it, but all their Posterity even to this day; and if any thing help this surfeit, it must be Fasting. The Prodigall cryes out, *Eame perco*, I dye by hunger; whereupon this presently followeth, *Sargam, ibo ad Patrem meum*, I will arise, and goe to my Father: It was Fasting and Hunger there you see, that restored him presently to his former estate. So that if our ancient lost liberty could possibly be repayed, it were no wayes better to be recovered, then by Fasting; and if by Fasting, the ship of this our life takes in no water;

water; and without it, is overwhelmed and drowned. Let us lay the whole lading of all our ill, or good, upon our Fasting. Saint *Ambrose* proveth, that while Fasting continued in the World, God did still better, and enrich it with new things: *The first day he Created the Light; the second, Heaven; the third, Earth; the fourth, Sunne, Moone, and Starrs; the fifth, the Fishes of the Sea, and the fowles of the Ayre; and though he gave them his blessing, yet he did not say unto them that they should Eat. The sixth, Beasts of the field, and Man, and giving them licence to Eat, the Works of God, and the perfections of the World, were ended; wherein God gave man, as it were, a Watch-word, that Eating would be his undoing. And as St. Chrysostome hath it, If in thus so happy an estate, Fasting was so necessary, what shall it be in this miserable condition of ours? Saint Johns Disciples said unto Christ, Master, Why doe we and the Pharisees Fast, and thy Disciples Fast not? He answered, While the Bridegroom is present, the Children are not to weep; but the time shall come wherein they shall not have him with them, and then they shall Fast and Mourn: The presence of our Saviour, and the enjoying of his most sweet company, did bridle their appetites, and keep their soules in subjection; but in his absence, he inferreth, that this must be done by Fasting. I might stay to tell you of miraculous effects by Fasting, in *Niniveh*, in *Moses*, in *Elias*, in *Daniel*, in *Easter*, in the Mothers of *Sampson*, and *Samuel*, in *Judith* in others: and how *David* with Fasting, covered the faults of his whole life. *Sola gula peccavit* (saith Saint Bernard) *sola jejuset, & sufficit*: Onely Gluttony offended, let Gluttony onely Fast; and it sufficeth; not that the Vertue consisteth wholly in abstaining from Meat, for our Saviour Fasted, but when he was oppressed with Hunger, he did Eat. And the like may every good Christian doe; yet a man may deny that to desire, which he may grant to necessity. So that, *Carnis curam nō feceritis in desideris*: Let the coeking of your Flesh be no part of your desire: but the maine, or principall Fasting is, to Fast from sin, to which the other Fasting is but onely a preparative. So that all this Discourse touching Fasting, is but superfluous, having such foreible Arguments to move us thereunto. I rather therefore think bet-*

1 Cor. 10.
31.

ter to advise you how it ought to be done, and that without trespassing at all against my own ease, you your selves may sufficiently see, in that of Saint Paul to the *Corinthians*, *Sive comedatis, sive bibatis, sive quid aliud facitis, omnia in gloriam Dei facite*: Whether ye eat, or drink, doe all to the glory of God. Which that ye may the better doe, in your Fasting observe these foure particulars.

Mat. 6.16.

1. That we must not onely doe good, but shun evill: let us not be like those Hypocrites, whom the wind of vain glory rob'd of all the good they did: we are but dust; and the Gospel bids us beware of Winde, that we be not carried away therewith; this vain ostentation of man, hanging our Consciences upon other mens lips: but for our parts, we must not onely doe good, but shun evill.

2. We must acknowledge, That our Fasting and good works, are more from God, then our selves; *Non possumus cogitare aliquid ex nobis*: Of our selves we cannot so much as think a good thought. Mans poverty is so great, that he cannot so much as come to a good thought, and therefore may not make Merchandise of that wealth which is none of his own: but God is so free in the works of Vertue, and so bountifull, That being at all the charge himselfe, he gives thee all the gaine; onely he wills, that thou give the glory unto him, and take the profit to thy selfe. That workman shall doe ill, who having built a house with another mans purse, should goe about to set up his own Arms upon the Frontispiece. Justinian made a Law, That no Master workman should set up his name within the body of that Building which he made out of anothers cost. Christ sets thee on work, and wills thee to Fast, to Pray, to give Almes; but who is at the cost of this so good and great a worke? God: thou hast all thy materials from him, the building is his, it is his Purse that payes for all; give then the Glory and the Honour to him: *Gloriam meam alteri non dabo*: I will not give my Glory to another; content thou thy selfe with Heaven, which is promised unto thee, if thou dost well, which is a sufficient reward for any service thou canst doe.

3. Beware of Hypocrisie in Fasting. *Fasting, Praying, and giving*

giving of Almes, done onely for Gods sake, is of that great price and estimation, that it is ill imployed on any other then God; and for that, God weighes all things in his hand, as in a ballance, and knows the weight of every good work, and the true value thereof; it grieves him that they should doe these good things for so vile and base a price, and is sorry to see thee so foolish, and poor a Merchant, that thou wilt part with that which is as much worth as Heaven to thee, for that which is lesse then Earth; namely, that the World should onely say, *thou hast Fasted*. Why dost thou thus crucifie thy flesh? why debarre thy belly of food? why being ready to dye for hunger, dost thou not eat? why liftest thou up thine eyes to Heaven, for so poor a thing, as to win applause upon Earth? Those works saith *Iob*, that are done for God, are *Gold*; but done for the World, are *Dirt*; they lay up this their treasure in the Tongues and Eyes of men, which is a Chest that hath neither Lock nor Key unto it.

4. *Fasting* is a Plaster for our wounds, a Medicine for our Griefes, a Salve for our Sins, and a Defence against Gods Wrath; but you must take heed that you doe not make this Plaster, Poyson; this medicine, sicknesse; this salve, a sore; and this defence, your destruction: for where God hath a Church, there the Devill will have a Chappell; and where he throws in Seed, there the other will sow Tares. *Naboth*, a Subject of King *Ahabs* had a Vineyard in *Samaria*, neer unto the Kings Pallace; the King had a mind unto it: *Naboth* will not part with it; the King grows sad, refuses his meat: *Isabel* comes to see him, makes a jest of it; takes Pen in Hand, dispatches a Ticket to the Governours of that City, sealed with the Kings Seale, to Proclaime a Fast, subornes two Witnesses to swear, *That they heard Naboth blaspheme God and the King*: innocent *Naboth* is stoned to death, and his goods confiscated. In which action, there are two things worthy our consideration; The one, That the circumstances of blaspheming God and the King upon a solemne day of Fast, was so grievous, that of force he must be condemned to dye for it, in so great veneration was Fasting in those dayes. The other, That it served as a cloak for the taking away of the Vineyard, and for the falsifying of Witnesses, and injustice in the Judges: Who should

should have then seen the people to Fast, would have thought it had been done out of Zeale, Gods Honour, and a desire to doe him service: but it was meerly a trick of the Devils, which he had plotted with himselfe; he threw poyson upon vertue, seeking to draw evill out of good. We must therefore beware, least these our good actions receive not hurt by evill intentions. And therefore, farre be it from among any of you, that upon these solemne dayes of Fasting, there should lurk under the sable habit of a monner, any false hearted, or hypocriticall masker; for it is to be feared, that among many in this Land of ours, even upon our solemne dayes of Humiliation, masking might be found in mourning. But the Fast that God requires, you may see in *Isaiah* 58. 5. 6. 7. *Is it such a Fast that I have chosen? that a man should afflict his soule for a day, and hang downe his head like a bulrush, and lye downe in sackcloth and ashes. Wilt thou call this a Fasting, or an acceptable day unto the Lord? Here the Prophet shewes, That God neither approves, nor condemnes Fasting in it selfe, further then when it is applyed to the right end. So that here is the abuse in Fasting, when men put holinesse in it, and in either, despising or neglecting true godlinesse, they think that the bodily exercise alone sufficeth; but he protests, That this is not acceptable to him, to see one continue a day without meat, and to go sorrowfully with his head hanging down like a bulrush, and lying downe in sackcloth and ashes: he taxes these superstitious gestures, wherein Hypocrites are wont to place a kinde of holinesse; not that he condemnes these external rites, but rebukes these Hypocrites for separating the truth from the signes. And in the next Verses, he tells you what kinde of Fast it is that God likes and allowes of, *Is not this the Fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickednesse, to take off the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed goe free, and that ye breake every yoke? Is it not to deale thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that wander into thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and hide not thy selfe from thine own flesh?* Here the Prophet shews first, what the Lord chiefly and principally requires in our Fast. Secondly, by what means our services may be acceptable before him. And thirdly,*

How

How those ought to be fitted and prepared that meane to Fast : In a word, you may see here wherein the true offices of Piety, (which are principally commanded of God) consist ; namely, in comforting the poor, and oppressed. We may likewise see here the duties God allows of in Fasting, what makes our fasts allowed of, approved, and acceptable unto God : namely, when together with Fasting, Charity is joyned with it : The *Fast that God hath chosen, is to loose the bands of wickednesse* : Some expound it, the wicked thoughts wherewith men are bound and intangled. And it may passe for currant ; for the principall *Fasting*, is to *Fast from sinne*. But it seems *Isaiah* meant otherwise ; namely, That Hypocrites are very cruell and mercilesse towards the poor, and lay very heauey yokes upon them ; he calls that *Knots*, or *Bands*, which we commonly tearme *Oppressions* ; to which that agrees which is added, *to take off the heauy burthens*, under the weight whercof, the poor and needy groane, and are in a manner overwhelmed therewith. The Prophet, me thinks, would bring us to this principle, namely, That our Consciences may be pure and sound, and that we exercise our selves in shewing brotherly kindnesse one to another ; for if this order be duely observed, then *Fasting* added thereto, will be pleasing and acceptab'e to the Lord. The Fast that God hath chosen is, *To deale thy bread to the hungry, to clothe the naked, &c.* For as in the observing of a *Fast* (as you had before) we must not onely doe good, but shun euill ; so we must not onely abstain from doing wrong to the poor, from laying heauy yokes and knots upon them ; but we must shew our selves liberall and lowly towards the afflicted, and such as stand in need of our help. For there are two parts of equity and justice ; first, That we offer no man any wrong. Secondly, That we imploy our riches and goods towards the maintenance of them that are in want and necessity, and these two parts must be joyned together ; for it is not enough to abstaine from violent courses, unlesse therewithall we shew mercy in releeeing our poor brethrens wants : Neither is it sufficient to succour one, if you rob from some to bestow upon others ; for we must not releee our neighbours wants by Thefts and Pillages ; and if thou hast committed any injustice, cruelty,

- ¹⁵⁰⁰ or extortion, though oughtest not to make amends by calling in God to thee, as if thou wouldest make him partner with thee of thy spoiles: It is necessary then you see, that these two parts of equity and justice be joyned together, if we would have God to approve and allow of our Charity. First, We must offer no man wrong. Secondly, We must imploy our riches and goods towards the maintenance of them that are in want; we must, together with abstaining from violent courses, shew mercy, in relieving our poor brethrens wants. Dost thou fast? then deale thy bread to the hungry, for this the fast that God hath chosen; and indeed, true Religion standeth chiefly in Charity to the poor. To visit the Fatherlesse and Widow; for love is set forth in sundry places, as the chiefe of all graces; especially in the first of the *Corinthians*, the thirteenth, to the end of the Chapter. Now where there are no acts of Charity, no giving of Almes to the poor, there can be no love, as Saint *John* largely proveth, Almesdeeds therefore, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked; to distribute and give of our goods to the poor, is greatly required both in the Old and New Testament. *Moses* chargeth the people of *Israel* often, To give, and to lend freely to their poor brethren. *David* describeth the righteous man by this, That he is mercifull, and distributeth, and scattereth abroad. *Solomon* makes the Lord his Debtor that giveth to the poor, saying, He that giveth to the poor, lendeth to the Lord. And *Isaiah* bids, to bring the poor wandering into thine house, and to break thy bread to the hungry. See Christ blessing the mercifull and commanding to give to him that asketh, and not to turn away from the poor that would borrow, and acknowledgeth the receipt of whatsoever is given to the poor, as if it were given unto himself; For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat: naked, and ye clothed me, &c. And to move us hereunto; first, Let us consider, that it is Gods command, of whose gift it is that we enjoy any thing. Secondly, The poor be our brethren; yea, our own flesh: then hide not thy face from thine own flesh. Its inhumanity, me thinks, to disdain and despise those in whom we are forced to acknowledge our own Image; for howsoever the rich may account of the poor, the poor by nature is as good as the rich; the rich are no better then they

they are all alike by nature. So *Nehemiah*, *Our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, and our sons as their sons; and though they be brought in subjection, they and their children, their lands and their vineyards; yet here is their happiness, the Lord is their portion, and Heaven their Inheritance.* *Lazarus* shall passe from the Paws of Dogs, to the Hands of Angels; from the Porch of a Tyrant, to the Bosome of *Abraham*. Thirdly, Let the rich help the poor, and the poor will help the rich. But perhaps some will say, We stand no need of Beggars help; yes sure, thou standest in need of their Prayers, and pity hath ever a Prayer for him that stands in need of it. Let the rich then relieve the poor, and the poor will pray for the rich; for this is the reason why God made some men rich, and some men poor; he made the rich men his soas and heires here upon Earth, to the end, that their younger brethren, the poor, might have their secure sustenance; and he made the poor men heires of Heaven, that the rich might have there their secure happiness: So that the rich by relieving the poor, and the poor by praying for the rich, might both, by Gods favour, have equall portions in Heaven. God made some rich, and some poor, that the abundance of the rich might supply the wants of the poor, and the abundance of the poor supply the wants of the rich, and so their lot might be alike. Take it in the Apostles words, *Ut vestra abundantia*, that your abundance may supply their want, and their abundance may be for your want, that there way be equality. *Saint Chrysostome* saith, *That God did not create the rich to relieve the poor, but the poor, that the rich might not be barren of good works; and if the Clouds be full, they will poure forth raine upon the Earth: the rich man must be like a Cloud, if he have abundance, let him distribute it liberally.* Fourthly, To give to the poor, is a means to thrive the better, because thus we obtain Gods blessing to the doubling and multiplying of what we give; for pity was ever profitable to them that used it. *Cast thy bread upon the waters, after a few dayes thou shalt find it: Give to the poor, and though it seem to be as a thing ventured at Sea, yet it shall bring the profit, even such profit as is beyond esteem, unspeakable joy, and a Kingdom without a change.*

And here it may be enquired, since we must give to the poor, first, Who ought to give. Secondly, How much. Thirdly, To whom. And fourthly, In what manner.

For the first, Who ought to give; My answer is, That every one who is not a receiver of Almes, ought to be a giver of Almes. It is true indeed, That this duty is first, and chiefly commended to the rich, 1 Tim. 6. 17. 18. 1 John 3. 17. Luke 12. 33. 2 Cor. 8. 14. But our Lord Jesus Christ goeth further, and commandeth, *That if a man have two Coats, to give to him that hath none, and he that hath meat, to doe likewise,* Luke 3. 11.

Touching the second, How much we must give; and for this, I find no certain direction any where set down, but onely, *That we should give liberally; and give a portion to six and to seven; and to give to him that asketh; and every man as God hath blessed him.*

Touching the third, To whom we must give; Lusty rogues of either Sex onely excepted, who either must work, or else let them not eat: due Correction is more necessary to give to such (if they ask) them Bread. But these persons excepted, the answer shall be, *Give to him that asketh; Doe good to all, but especially to those that be of the household of faith; The Fatherlesse, the Widows, the helpelesse persons, the Aged, Halt, and Blind, and all that are in want, or needfull, are commended to your Charity.*

Obj. But perhaps some will object and say, *Would you have us to give to all that aske? we know, that the poor neer us are so bad, and wicked, and ill-condition'd, that it is no Almes to give to them. And as for wanderers, the Statute prohibits it; and besides, being strangers to us, we cannot tell whether it be Charity or no, to give unto them?*

Ans. These excuses of thine, are no better then fig-leaves. I tell thee, thou must doe good to all; and if any be so bad, together with your Almes-giving, give them admonition, and exhort them to reforme. And as for strange Beggars, in-whom indeed you may be deceived, yet your Almes shall be no whit the lesse acceptable that you give them, seeing they aske as Christs poor Members, and in the name of poor and helpelesse persons;

persons; *And he that gives to a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, shall not lose a Prophets reward:* but they shall be sure to beare the burthen of their dissimulation, whereby they invade the Inheritance of the poor, to the robbing and despoyling them of a great part thereof.

Touching the fourth, In what manner Almes ought to be given. The answer is, They must be given cheerfully, and without all vain glory, and opinion of merit, and onely of that which is our own, and that in due season, or due time. First, cheerfully, *For God loveth a cheerful giver*; He that giveth grudgingly, as it were out of constraint, doth indeed the thing commanded; but because he doth it not with an heart, it is no more accepted of, then Prayer made with the Lips, when the Heart is away. Secondly, without Vain glory, We must give, not desiring to have our Charity taken notice of by others; for so the Pharisees gave Almes to be seen, and prayed of men; of whom it was said, *That they had their reward*. Thirdly, Without all opinion of Merit; Almes must be given in humility, we acknowledging this to be our duty, as a Steward is bound in duty to give to every one his Portion; for we are but Stewards under God of that which we have; our Goods are a Portion committed to our trust, to use according to his will, as the Talents in the Parable. Now God, by whose allowance we have these Portions, appointeth us to use them so, as the poor may have comfort of them: and thus, in the persons of the poor, we render unto God some part of his own again, for Christ accepts it as done unto him. Fourthly, We must give of that which is our own onely, not of what we have unjustly gotten; for, as is shewed in the Example of *Zacchew*, *things unjustly gotten, must first be restored*, and then Almes are to be given; for in giving stolen goods, or such as be gotten by oppression, or deceit, man maketh God a party in the theft, or wrong, which he hath committed; when as indeed he is so far from this, that he expostulateth with such for comming into his House; saying, *Will you lie, Steale, commit adultery, and come and worship in this House, &c.* The just God will not, in the person of the poor, accept of any thing unjustly gotten. Fifthly

Psal. i. 3.
Gal. 6. 10.

ly and lastly, We must give in due time, or due season; For *the blessed man is like to a Tree, that bringeth forth fruit in due season.* And, *whilst we have time,* saith the Apostle, *let us doe good to all.* Some rely upon a last Will and Testament, thinking to be accepted in their giving then, when they must needs depart with all that they have. To give, when a man can keep his goods no longer, is no better, then to break off from any sin, when he can no more commit it. But for such as have neglected this duty in their life, let them humble themselves; and rather then not at all, give liberally at their Death; and so happily, as the Lord shall see the heart truly affected with penitency, they may be accepted in their giving then. Thus you see, how Charity is a principall point of true Religion. And if any shall alledge, *That their goods are their own, and therefore see no reason (like charlish Nabal) to make that common, which God hath given to their particular use?* I answer, That thy goods doe indeed appertaine unto thee; but upon condition, that thou dealest one part thereof to the hungry and thirsty; for thou art but a Steward; and sure, the hungry are defrauded of their right, unless their wants be supplied. And this is one thing that sanctifieth the *Fast*. Another thing is *Prayer*; for *Fasting* is but the hand-maid of *Prayer*; but of this when we come to the period of the Text, *Cry unto the Lord.*

Thus having upon second thoughts, (though contrary to the Rules of Art) lookt a little back upon the duty enjoyned, the first part of my Text. I now come to the second circumstances of the second part, which I called; *The Method, or Order prescribed*; of which the first being this, *Call a solemn Assembly.* The next is, *Gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land.*

Wherein is to be observed, The generality of this *Fast*. In the Verse fore-going the Text, you see a command layd onely upon some private persons, *the Priests, and the Ministers*, they are to howle and lament: but private mournings is not sufficing for *Publick Sorrows*; there must be an epidemicall lamentation by a *solemn Assembly*. And this Assembly must not be shyn, *vel duo, vel vno*, as the saying is, a small Congregation

to serve God; but it must be populous, and full, made up of a multitude, *Gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land.* Hence, let this be the point; Christs Schoole, is a Schoole for all sorts; not onely the Elders, but *all the Inhabitants.* *Let the tares (saith our Saviour) grow with the wheat,* it may be they may wither and dye ere Harvest: the meaning is, That it may be they may dye to sin. Witnesse the Jayler, who over night was *seourging*; ere morning, *washing and anointing* the wounds of the Apostles. Witnesse *Zachew*, who of a pilling and powling Publican, and a grinder of the faces of the poor, presently became a mercifull refresher of their bowels. Witnesse many others, &c.

Every mans life is a Way, wherein, without intermission, he walkes from the Wombe to the Grave; *Ab uero ad Sepulchrum ambulamus omnes*; and this is the way which *Joshua* calls, *the way of all flesh.* But in this way there is a great difference, for some are upright in it, and those are declared to be such, as walk in the way of godlinesse to glorification. Others turn aside after the crooked wayes of sin, and those walk on unto perdition; they goe singing, and in a moment tumble into Hell. Now the Lord our God, *that would not the death of a sinner*, calls all to Repentance, whilest we, not feeling those privy nips, and perillous wounds, that sin impaires our soules withall, doe swim in the fullest delights, that invention can procure us, and our souls cleaving to the midst of our mirth, our way but beguyles us; and for not minding our Voyage, in stead of arriving at our wished for Haven, we are sucked into the gulfe ere ever we are aw re; so that we had need labour for a Reformation, by the wholesome Information of the Word; and Christs Schoole, being a Schoole for all sorts, we had need all become Schollars in the Schoole of Christ, both young and old, and old as well as young.

First, young men; for the age of youth is indeed the age of right reformation; Bend a tree while it is but a twig, and it will ply which way you will have it; but let it alone untill it be a sturdy Oke, there is then no dealing with it. Even so, settle the soule once upon the lees of sinfull lust, and custome
in

in sinning proves another nature, and in the end becomes inflexible, incorrigible. Let a man through his youth set his face against Heaven, and blaspheme Gods Religion; it shall be as easie for the *Blackmoore to change his hue, or the Leopard his spots*, as for that man that hath been alwayes accustomed to evill, ever to learn to doe well: I doe not say impossible, for I know that it is the easiest thing in the world with God to enrich a sinner with his grace; and therefore we dispute not his power, nor his mercy. Not his power, for God can in an instant make of a sinner a Saint. Not his mercy, for Gods mercy knows no bounds nor limits. But it is not easie for that sinner that hath been alwayes accustomed to doe evill, ever to learn to doe well; for, you know, the curse is commonly passed out against those who have been so long fruitlesse; *Never fruits grow on thee henceforth*, neither in this World, nor in the World to come; reape they shall, bring forth they shall not; but they shall reape the fruit of Judgement, the fruit of punishment; other fruit they shall never bring forth, dead Trees, cut off from the land of the living; dead Branches, cut off from the Tree of Life. And indeed, what can that ground expect that brings forth nothing but thorns and bryars, but that the end of it should be to be burned? So that though ye rejoyce in your youth, O ye young men, yet remember you must come to Judgement. And sure it is but an evill and wofull division, when young years are given to Sathan, and old age to the Lord. Its the first fruits that God requires; And you may find Saint John writing to *Young men, as well as to Elders; to Children, as well as to Fathers*. And Solomon advise the young man, *To remember his Creator in the dayes of his youth*. And David, *to redresse his wayes*: For indeed, the age of youth is the very Harvest and Summer, in which who-soever sleepeeth, is the son of confusion; but he that gathereth is the child of wisdom. It is with grace, as it is with grafts, there must be a time of in-setting, and a time of out-growing, and both these must be seasonable before fruit can be expected; so that seed must be sown in youth, which must come up in age; For nup a blossome in the Spring, and where is the hope of its Autumpe? And indeed, where Sathan can make youth unprofitable

Mat. 21.

19.

Heb. 6. 2.

1 Ioh. 2.

12. 13.

Eccl. 12. 1.

Psal. 119. 9.

Prov. 10. 7.

unprofitable, little good nay, much spirituall beggery may be expected in all the other ages of that mans life. Again, Call thy wayes to remembrance while thou art young, that thy Conscience may be at peace when thou art aged; for assure thy selfe that the vanities of youth will vex the heart for many yeares after. See *David Praying against the sins of his youth*, *Psal. 25.* and not without a bitter sence and sting of them. *It was the voyce of Ephraim, I was ashamed, yea, confounded, because I did beare the reproach of my youth;* for though for the present a man may be sencelesse of his grossest sins; yet God will waken his Conscience at last, and make the very thought of his iniquities as bitter, as ever the practice of them was pleasant; the thought of them will fill him with trouble of Conscience, and bring him not onely to doubt of his effectuall calling to Grace, but almost to a despaire of his salvation. And if he would be senced against all these afterclaps, the time is now wherein he may prevent such afflictions, by bearing Gods yoke in his youth: Now is the time wherein he should take notice of that great bundle of folly which is naturally bound up in his heart. But alas! No age so much stops its cares, as this age of youth, charme the charmer never so wisely: For whereas young men should live as *Nazarites, consecrated to the Lord*; they rather live like men that have vowed, and dedicated themselves to the service of Sathan, loathing, or scorning to become Schollars in the Schoole of Christ, which indeed is most effectuall to cure the disordered affections of youth: But those that would be Trees of Righteousnesse, and known to be of the Lords own Planting, laden especially in their age with the fruits of the Spirit, must in their youth, timely bud, timely blossome, and timely beare; that so their whole lives may be a fruitfull course, whereby God may be glorified, others edified, and themselves receive in the end a more full consolation.

Secondly, as young men, so old as well as young, must be Schollars in the Schoole of Christ; for though its true, that the age of youth, of all ages, is most subject to the dangerous diseases of inordinate lusts: yet there is no age without its blemishes, not the hoary haire without its errors, *David*, so

often as he considered his wayes, found alwayes something that needed redresse; and there is none so well renewed in this life, but they may find something in themselves that needs further reformation. Who can say, he hath in such sort cleansed his Heart, as that he need not make it more cleane? Certainly, when sins are lopt, they grow againe; when they are chased away, they may turne againe, and the fire of sin being quenched, it kindles againe; so that we had need often lop our superfluous affections; if it be possible, alwayes. For let a man tell the truth as he finds it, and I dare say, he finds alwayes something in himselfe needing reformation. So that Old, as well as Young, should come to this Schoole. For surely, its a double shame and sin for an old man to be of an uncleane life, or to be ignorant of the Word, having lived till his head be gray, without making any progresse at all in the knowledge of godlinesse. The neerer we draw unto the Land of *Canaan*, the farther off should we be from the delights of *Egypt*; otherwise it will come to passe, in Gods righteous Judgement, that when in regard of our long journey, we are come to the very borders of that good Land, we shall be put back again, with those ear-nall *Israelites*, and never suffred to enter into it. O miserable condition of that man, whose body is declining to the Grave, but his spirit hath never learned to ascend to him that gave it: he comes (as I said) to the very borders of *Canaan*, I meane, to the very point of time wherein Gods Children make their happy transmigration; but by reason of his sins, he is thrust back againe, and never suffred to enter, when he should dye and ascend to the blessed fellowship of God, the Father of Lights: he dyes indeed, but descends to the pit of utter darkenesse, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth. What a woefull case then is it, that men should be thus soule under sin; nay, even spend and weare out themselves in plotting and contriving who should get themselves surest and deepest in? How are even the hearts of the Ancient, whose Faces Age hath wrickled, carried away, to seek abundance, desiring onely to become Heires of the World, never seeking God, nor his Kingdom, for their Portion? And though this service of profit seen some-
what

what more sweet and easie then the service of righteousness; yet when this Master comes with his wages, then tell me what becoms of the lovers of the World, more then of the lovers of God? surely they *shall not faile to receive the wages of unrighteousnesse*. O miserable service! nay, it is to be feared, that many of our glistering saints, our glorious professors, who would be admired for their holinesse, are too much bewitched with the sorcery of this sinne: But let them know, whosoever they be, that for all their outward varnish, and faire flourish of devotion, and shews of seeming holinesse; who, as if sanctity were ingaged onely to their service; being sick of a *Noli me tangere*, touch me not, I am more holy then thou, that their sins of hypocrisie, and covetousnesse, will blamish even the best things they have received, and darken the best duties they attempt: For indeed, a rare professor is that man, that can avoyd an Earthly mind in Earthly matters; and while he layes up on Earth, hath a free mind to treasure in Heaven. O that we could consider how these hatefull poysonous sins make us even justly odious to our God; and therefore let us labour to see the poyson of our own nature; and seeing it, strive to bewaile it: And for that purpose, let Young and Old, and Old as well as Young, all become Students in the Schoole of Christ; for true Knowledge is that which works Godlinesse. *Moses* himselfe, who was learned in all the learning of the Egyptians, must study to seek the Lord with an inward affection. And though *David* had more understanding then his teachers; yet he earnestly desires, to be further taught of the Lord his God; for the treasures of manifold wisdom were locked up in the Word, are so rich; that no man can attaine to such measure of Knowledge, but still he hath need to learne more: The Angels themselves are but Schollars in this Schoole; and because thou art Old, wilt thou scorne to learne with Angels? The very best, considering his wayes, may finde something in him to be amended. The Doctors and Masters of *Israel*, were but Fools in Christs esteeme. The young man that thought so goodly of himselfe, was ignorant of the way to Heaven, and would learne of our

2 Pet. 2.
13.

Saviours, how, or what to doe, to inherit Eternall Life. The Wisest of Men, *seeks for Wisedome*. And the Princely Prophet, *begs Understanding*. Let then high and low, rich and poor, old and young, all, run to that Fountaine from whence those Waters of Knowledge flow in abundance; for Christs Schoole is a Schoole for all sorts; *Not onely the Elders, but all the Inhabitants of the Land.*

From the generality of this Convocation, another Point may be this, That the Kingdome of Christ admits of no distinction, neither Prince, nor Peasant, for they are both his Subjects, both the worke of his hands. His Vineyard admits of all sorts of Labourers, from the Morning till the Evening; nay, to the very last Houre, the gates of mercy stand open for all; and Gods call is generall, *Come unto me all you that travel, and are heavy laden, &c.* He calls not onely the King, but the Subject; not onely the Lord, but the Slave; He calls the Poor, the Servant, *and they receive the Gospel*: Nay, *Christ came to call sinners to repentance*, without exception, *even Publicans and Sinners*. The God whom we serve, is no excepter of persons; and the Kingdome of Christ admits of no distinction. Its true indeed, there was a difference held, and a wall of partition was set up between Jew and Gentile, between People and People. Before the Flood were the Sons of God, and the Sons of Men: After the Flood, before the Law, there was the Promised Seed, and the Seed of the Flesh: after the Law, before Christ, was held the distinction of Jew and Gentile: With the former, God made his Covenant, them he took into his teaching, and passed by the other: To them pertained the Adoption, the Glory, the Covenant, the giving of the Law, the Service of God, the Oracles, the Promises; These had his People, his Prophets, ordinary and extraordinary. This difference David means of, in those words, *He showed his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Judgements unto Israel: But he deals not so with every Nation, neither have they known his ways*, Psal. 147. 19. 20. But now in this last Age of the World, this Covenant of *Grace and Life*, is made common to all People; every man is now called to Repen-

tance;

tance, and invited to come and drinke of Christs blood by Faith; the partition wall is now broken downe, the Vaile is rent, the gates of mercy wide opened, and that Mystery which was kept secret from the beginning of the World, is Published to all. The consideration whereof, should Rise us up to an exceeding rejoycing, in that, *The barren and desolate hath now more children then the Married Wife: that the place of the sons of the Church is thus enlarged, and the Curtains of her habitation thus spread out;* so that the Dogs and Whelps may now clap their hands for joy that they are received into pity, and that the wings of Gods mercy are stretched out over them: The poor beleever, the thrall, the servant, the base in the world, may cheere up their hearts, that even they, whom men so despised, are now so effectually called, to see the Grace and Salvation of God: He that perhaps is but a servant to some meane man here upon Earth, is a free Citizen in the Heavenly Jerusalem; he that hath never a foot here below, is become a great purchaser above. Here is no complaint that the Prodigall Son is entertain'd, and the serviceable Son neglected. The Eunuch need not now complaine and say, *I am a dry tree*: Nor the Son of the stranger. The Lord hath surely separated me from his people: but whosoever cleaveth unto the Lord to love the Lord, and serve him, *to them he will give a name better then of Sons and Daughters, even an everlasting name, that shall never be put out;* Thus you see, That the generall promises of the Gospel, are Published and offered to all, without exception, bond and free, Publican and sinner, Strangers and forreigners, are now *Comites Sanctorum*, fellow Citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God: so that our sins need not hinder us from approaching to the Thrones of Grace, if we can but come to the Lord Jesus upon the Feet of Faith and Repentance, heavens gates are as wide as ever, and the call as universal as ever; *Not only the Elders, but all the Inhabitants of the Land.* So we step on to the third Circumstance, in the Method or Order of keeping this Fast; the place of refuge, or Sacred Sanctuary, the House of the Lord your God.

*Isay 54.
1. 2.*

Isay 56. 3.

I must

I must now, like a faithfull Steward in my Masters house, take by the hand all you the weary Sons and Daughters of the everliving God, and leade you into the Kings Wine-cellars, there to refresh and stay you with the Flagons of his Wine, to comfort you with his Apples, to strengthen you with his hidden Manna, and to make you merry with that Milke and Honey which our so dearly loving Husband Christ Jesus hath provided for us, to sustaine us that we faint not through those manifold temptations which encumpasse us in this barren Wilderness, namely, into this right Arke, or little Zoar, The House of the Lord your God.

The whole Colledge of the bodily Physicians, and the Prince of them, that Wise and Learned Galen prescribes for the time of Plague, that of all Remedies to prevent the contagion, the best is, To fly, and shun the infected and corrupted Ayre, and to depart unto a wholesome and purer Ayre; and that with these three Rules, Cito, Longè, Tardè; To depart speedily, farre off, and returns slowly. And as this is Physically prescribed, so it hath been as diligently practised by all sorts of men: But because by the corruption of our Nature (which is more then the corruption of the Ayre) we suffer our selves as with maine sale to be carried away from the Creator to the Creatures, fixing all our senses more upon the Aeriall corruption, then upon the inward cause of the contagion, the Plague of our sins, and rottenness of our bones and bowels, which we carry within our selves, and are more carefull to depart into the Country, then unto the Lord, as if by the swiftnesse of our Feet, we could out-run him who *Rideth upon the Wings of the Cherubims*, which often causeth, that the Lords Pursuivant doth often Arrest us in the purer Ayre, as well in the Country, as in the City.

In the time of Famine, the best Remedy is, To fly from places of scarcity, to places of more plenty. And this was practised by Josephs Brethren, *who went into Egypt to buy Food*; but because of their sins, trouble came upon them in their very first journey thither; and though after that they were nourished, *and had Possessions in the best of the Land*; yet were they

Gen. 42. 5.

Gen. 47.

they at last kept under with burthens, and by cruelty caused to serve; insomuch, that the Egyptians made them weary of their lives by sore labour in Clay and Bricks, and in all worke of the Field, with all manner of Bondage which they cruelly layd upon them. Exod. I. n.

In the time of Warre, The best way to preserve our goods from spoyle, and our selves from Captivity is, To fly to the best and strongest Garrisons; and this was as diligently practised by us in the time of the late Warrs in this unhappy Land; but that proved so poor a safegard, as that which was there preserved for a time, quickly became a Prey to others. And since in the Storms of misery all these are such poor shelters; I will therefore prescribe you a better flight in the time of Plague, or Famine, or Warre, or any other common calamity, then that of *Galen*, or that of *Isaacs* Sonns, or that of our *English*; namely, To the name *Jehovah*, that Tower Royall; or as *Solomon* calls it, Strong Tower, *The Name of the Lord is a strong Tower, the Righteous runneth unto it, and is preserved; even the House of the Lord our God.* Prov. 18. 10. And this was *Dauids* practice in the time of Plague. *H Ezekiahs* practice in the time of Warre: And here, the Prophets direction in the time of Famine, *Gather the Elders, and all the Inhabitants of the Land into the House of the Lord your God.* 1 Sam. 24. 25 2 Kings 19. 1.

And now, that I may the better instruct you in this journey to this House, I will branch the description of this House into these three severall parts, which will store us with clusters of singular Meditations. First, the Name of this Place, *its an House*, and therefore a shelter against all Stormes and tempests. Secondly, The property of this Place, *its the House of the Lord*, and therefore able to defend us against all assaults and violence. Thirdly, the safenesse of this Place, the owner is *our God*, God is our Father, and such a Father as will not shut the doore against his children, that in time of extremity fly to him for security. So that in coming to this place, *we come to the Lord our God, strong, mercifull, and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodnesse and truth.* Exod. 24. 6. Psal. 103. who 3. *We come to the Lord our God, the suprem Physitian of our soules,*

Psal 63
1. 2.

who healeth all our iniquities. We come to the Lord our God, to whom power belongeth, and whose alone is salvation. Who would not then run to this Place, this House, this Tower Royal in the time of Warre, Plague, Famine, Sicknesse, Diseases, or any Calamity, or Misery? O ye Righteous souls that thirst, or may thirst, by reason of the heate of the Plague, or at least by reason of the heate of the Plague of sinne, fly unto this place; Here be the waters of comfort, here are wells enough to be drawne off to coole the heate of a thirsting soule: This is the Place which God hath Preclaimed to the World, That if the heavy laden will but come, he will ease them; if the thirsty will but come, he will refresh them. O ye Righteous souls, who in the time of Warre, are in continuall feare and danger of your bodies imprisoning, of your goods plundering, of your sons butchering, of your daughters deflowering, and of the pouring forth of your blood like water upon the ground; and not onely the perpetuall enslaving of you, and your posterity, but that which is worst of all, the violating of your Consciences by Oaths and Engagements, at the will of the Conquerour, fly unto this House; here be the Armes and Armory of the strong men, and when you cry, your Enemies shall turne backe. O ye Righteous souls, who in the time of Famine are ready to dye for hunger, having pale and bloodlesse Faces, lanke and leane bodies, hunger-starved carcasses, and in this extremity know not what to doe; run to this Place, this House, the Master whereof can feed an Elias by Ravens; A Daniell in Dungeons; And the Widow and her Son with a Cruse of Oyle that never wasteth: and here shall ye be sure to finde satining food for your soules. In a word, In any calamity, in all Straights and miseries whatsoever, fly to this Place, this House of the Lord your God. And in all kinds of distresse, let us approach this Throne of Grace; let us enter these Gates and Courts with joy; let our Prayers come unto him in his holy Temple; and let us all, like David, be glad when men say, Come, let us goe to the House of the Lord; for there is salve for every sore, there is medicine for every disease, and there is comfort at all assayes. In this world we are as, Pil-
grim

grims, having here no continuing City; and while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; in which Pilgrimage, *many are the troubles of the Righteous*; and if they fly to this sacred Sanctuary, *and there cry unto the Lord, the Lord delivers them out of all*. And to hearten you hereunto, know for your comforts, That the Lord whom you serve, is not like to the Princes and Rulers of the Earth, who desire not to be molested with requests from their distressed Subjects; but its joy to the Almighty, and he takes pleasure to heare their supplications, and is most glad when they aske, or beg of him the best things. What a comfort is this then to all afflicted souls, in the heat and height of their afflictions, and depth of their miseries, to have a place of refuge, and a place of refreshment, and preservation to run unto, and there refresh their wearied members, and supplicate the God of Glory, and the God of all Consolation.

But now, though we have a place of safety to fly unto in the time of trouble and danger; yet a man may mistake his way thither and then, never a whit the neerer. And therefore, least we should erre in our way to this place, the Lord himselfe hath given us a constant guide, and card of direction to leade us thereunto, even the witnesse of his holy Word, Written, and Sealed, that can never deceive us, but is as a fiery pillar unto us in the darke desert of this World, to shew us the way to that Heavenly Canaan; *It is a lanthorne to our feet, and a light to our paths*: let then our loynes be girded, and let us beare in our hands this shining light. But yet, though we have a place to fly to in trouble, and likewise, a guide to direct us the way; yet a man (especially in misery) would not willingly goe to a place, where he hath neither title, nor right, nor interest, nor friend, nor acquaintance, where he may expect, if not shutting the doore upon him, yet, at least, poor entertainment, and miserable comforters. Now to hearten us against these feares, the Text tells us, *That we are of the same Family, or Household*, for the Master, or Lord of this house, is our God, so that it is, as it were, our own; for it is usuall for Children, or servants, to call

their Fathers or Masters house wherein they live, our House, and there we shall finde our best acquaintance, and our choicest friends, *even God, our Father; Christ, our Brother; and the holy Ghost, our Comforter.* But still, though we have a secure place of refuge to *fly unto in danger, and a guide to direct us that we erre not in our way, and good right and Interest thereunto, being of the same Family, and Friends, and acquaintance there also;* yet being infected with the Plague of sinne, and laden with iniquity, we may feare that we shall not be received; for those in whose soules the Plague of sin doth reigne, however they may come into the society of the Church, yet cannot be admitted to the Throne of Grace; And therefore to the end our sins should neither dishearten, nor hinder us; know, That the Lord our God hath given us Christ the Righteous, to cover our unrighteousnesse, so that as pure and cleane we might come unto him; He hath put on us *the Lord Jesus Christ*, that being adorned with his righteousness and holinesse, as *Isaac* was with the goodly garments of his elder Brother *Esau*, we might with confidence betake our selves to this *Asylum*, and in the name of Christ, might goe to the name of *Iehovah*; and in his name, the Subject hath as much right to goe, as the King; the People, as the Priest; the Slave, as the Lord; the Servant, as the Master; and the infected, as the sound; for Christ prayeth with us all as our Brother; he prayes for us all as our High Priest; and he is prayd unto by us all, as our Lord; he alone is the Eye wherewith we see the Father, the Hand to offer up our Prayers unto him, the Mouth to speake unto him; and therefore let us goe unto him, by vertue of this right, that he is the Lord our God, and we of his Family and Household.

But for all this, *though we have a House to goe unto, and want not a guide, and be of the same Family, and stored with Acquaintance, and adorned with our Elder Brothers Righteousnesse;* yet, if we be lame, or have not Feet to carry us thither, we are but like the Creeple at the Pool, obnoxious to all hindrances. And therefore, though the Feet of the Flesh be sufficient to carry us to the Church; yet we must have other

- Rom. 13.

14.

other Feet, even Spirituall Legs, before we can come to this House; namely, the Feet of Faith and Prayer: Faith is the first Foot; for *if by Faith we stand*, by Faith we may also goe *1 Cor. 1.* to the Lord, who is faithfull; and how could we goe unto *24.* him by the Foot of Prayer, if we did not beleve in him? *For how shall they call on him, in whom they have not beleved?* *Rom. 10. 13*

The second Foot is *Prayer*, which is so swift a Foot, as that it dispatcheth in an instant all the way betwixt Heaven and Earth, and as a fiery Chariot mounts into the presence of the Almighty to implore his assistance; and though we live here in this vale of misery, so farre off from our Fathers House; yet being furnished with these two Spirituall Feet, we may in a moment ascend up thither, and there recreate our wearied spirits; though we live in this world, as in a vast desert, if we be in want of any thing, with these Spirituall Feet we may runne to our Fathers House, and there provide ourselves. If the Lord hath cast us down upon our bed of sickness, that we cannot use the Feet of our bodies; yet he hath given us these other Feet of *Faith and Prayer* to use in stead of them. *H Ezekiah* being sick of the Plague, could not use the Feet of his Body; but with the Feet of the Spirit, he went unto this place. *Jonah* was lockt up in Prison in the belly of the Whale, yet by the vertue of these Feet, out of the depth he ascended to the holy Temple of *Iehovah*. But notwithstanding all this *though we know we have a House to goe unto, and no hinderance in the way, nor difficulty in the passage, nor want a guide to direct us, and have good right to the place, and friends and acquaintance to entertaine us, and robes to adorne us, and feet to carry us thither; yet if we know not how to behave our selves when we come there, though we come as suiters, we shall be but bad speeders. And therefore the next shall be, to teach you how to demean your selves in this House of the Lord your God. And for this purpose, I shall for your sakes, endeavour my selfe to binde you all to such good behaviour in Gods House, as becomes the glory of his publick service and presence; for the godly Christian*

ought with all care to lay before him the rules that tie him to a comely compesure and carryage in the House of God; and to strive to fashion his nature and practice so, as may become the Majesty of his Publick Worship; for there be divers things which in a speciall manner must be lookt unto in performing these publick duties: And to this end, I shall give you some few Rules, which if you please to observe, you shall not onely be good *Susters*, but good *Speeders* also.

First, All, of all sorts, must come and appear publickly before the Lord, to doe him homage and service, *Vix nulla fortior*, the more, the better; not onely the Elders, but all the Inhabitants of the Land. This you may see in *Deuteronomy* 31. 11. 12. 13. where you shall find, *That all Israel were to come to appeare before the Lord their God in the place which he should chuse, men, women, and children, and the stranger within their gates, that they might heare, and learne, and feare the Lord their God, and keep and observe the words of his Law: none exempted, all must come.*

Secondly, We must come with all possible reverence, and look to our feet when we enter into the House of God, and strive to shew before all men our most carefull respect to God & his holy Ordinances; for God will be sanctified by them that come neer him, and he looks for it at our hands, by our reverent behaviour, to be glorified before all the people. See it your selves, in the tenth of *Levitiew*, and the third: And *Ecclesiastes* the fifth, and first; and be perswaded to shew a most holy and reverent feare of Gods name, and presence; So that Princely Prophet. *I will come into thine House in the multitude of thy mercies: and in thy feare will I worship towards thy holy temple*, *Psal.* 5. 7.

Thirdly, We must come with a great deale of Zeale: In all publick duties that of *David* should be true of us, *The Zeale of Gods House should eat us up* *Psal.* 69. 9. And this singular Zeale we should shew these six ways.

1. By loving Gods House above all other places in the world, our hearts should be fired in us in that respect; that we may truly say with the *Psalmist*, *O how I love thy house! I have loved the habitation of thine house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.*

2. By

2. By resolutely purposing to resort to Gods House with joy and gladnesse, notwithstanding the scornes and oppositions of worldly men. O that we were of *Dauids* mind, glad, when men say, *Come, let us goe into the House of the Lord*, *Psal. 122. 1.*

3. By stirring up others with all importunity to goe with us to worship God in *Sion*. *The mountaine of the House of the Lord shall be prepared in the top of the mountaines, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all Nations shall flow unto it: (the word flow, declaring the zeale of the Children of God when they are called.) And many people shall goe and say, Come, let us goe up to the mountaine of the Lord, to the House of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his wayes, and we will walke in his paths; for the Law shall goe forth of Zion, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem, Isay 2. 2. 3.*

4. By making hast to Gods worship, going to the House of the Lord with the first, and with willing hearts, with an holy thirst after the means, flocking and flying thither as the Cloudes, or as so many Doves to their Windows. Up, let us goe and pray before the Lord, and seek the Lord of Hosts, *Zachar. 8. 21.* And the Psalmist, *Thy people shall come willingly at the time of assembling thine army in holy beauty; from the wombe of the morning, thou hast the dew of thy youth, Psal. 110. 3.*

5. By forwardnesse and cheerefulnesse in contributing towards the maintenance of Gods House and service in the means thereof.

6. By grieving heartily, because other men neglect and contemne the House of God: The Zeale of Gods Children ought to be such, when they see his Word sleighted, as that they should be like *David*, whose Eyes gush out with Rivers of Water, because men keep not thy Law, *Psal. 119. 136.*

Fourthly, We should in all publick Duties, serve God with one consent, and one heart: There should appeare in Gods servants a wonderfull desire of unanimity and concord, that when they speake to God, it may be as the voyce of one man; when the Lord speaks to them, they should heare with one Eare: It is a marvellous glory in Religion, when people can come
to

Zeph. 3. 9. to this, to serve the Lord with one shoulder; Let us all call upon the name of the Lord, and serve him with one consent, or as it were with one shoulder.

Fifthly, and lastly, look upon the fifty second *Psalme*, eighth and ninth verses; and from thence we may gather three other Rules which in a speciall manner fit us for a descent behaviour in Gods House.

1. We should alwayes be as green Olive-trees in the House of the Lord; *But I shall be like a green Olive tree in the House of God*: For howsoever it goe with men in the world, yet when we come before the Lord, our hearts should rejoyce and revive, and our spirits be fresh and cheerfull, and our affections should be healed of all the cares and distempers that were in them before. Gods Ordinances should have such a power over us as to make a suddaine fresh spring of desires and holy thoughts in us; there is that power in the Ordinances of God to effect this, if the fault be not in us, I meane, when these Ordinances are exercised in the power and life of them. Let us then rejoyce to have a place among the servants of God, that we may grow in the knowledge of godlinesse, and be like green Olive-trees in the House of God.

2. We must trust in the mercy of God, *For I trusted in the mercy of God for ever and ever*, bringing an heart ready to beleevæ every good Word of God; and resolving, that if the Lord will speak comfortably to his servants, we will not dishonour his consolations through carelesnesse and unbeliecte, but receive them with all our hearts, and establish our selves in the safe keeping of his good word; Let us trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.

3. We must resolve to be thankfull, *I will alwayes prayse thee for that thou hast done*. Let us be thankfull with all earnestnesse for all experiences of Gods presence and goodness towards us in the means, vowing with *David*, to prayse him for ever for them; and if the Lord doe withhold his power and presence for a time, so as we feele not the effectualnesse of his Ordinances, yet we should resolve, without distemper, to wait upon the Lord, and observe him, according

to the seasons of his grace, and alwayes prayse him for that he hath done.

Thus having hitherto endeavoured to tye you all to such good behavieure in the House of the Lord, in all your publick service and worship of God, as shall become the glory of his presence, wishing that these my weak and unskillfull labours might woove some more excellent Wits, and more skillfull Pens, to batter this Discourse, so needfull to be founded in our Ears in these unhappy and unmannerly times, wherein so many come so saweily, and irreverently into the presence of the God of glory, never once considering with *Jacob, How dreadful is this Place, and that this is no other but the House of God.* I shall now likewise endeavour to tye you all to the good-behaviour in your hearing of the Word of God; for which, these three directions will order you aright; whereof some will bind us to the good-behaviour before we come to heare, some at the time of hearing, and some after we have heard.

1. *Before we come to heare,* We must bring with us two things. First, A resolution to deny our own wits, reasons, opinions, and conceits, and empty our heads of all perswasion of our own skill, to judge of the things of God, being ready to beleewe and think in all things, as God shall teach us out of his Word; *We must be fools, that we may be wise,* humbling our selves at his very feet to receive his law. *They are humbled at thy feet to receive thy words.* Secondly, We must bring with us a meek and quiet spirit, a mind quieted from passions and perturbations, and at rest from the turmoiling cares of this world. The Word is able to doe great things in us, if we receive it with meeknesse; *Wherefore lay apart all filthinesse, and superfluity of naughtinesse, and receive with meeknesse the ingrafted Word, which is able to save your soules,* James 1. 21.

1 Cor. 3.
18.
Dent. 33.
3.

2. *At the time of hearing,* two things are to be observed. First, We must hearken without distraction, we must heare as it were for our lives; we must incline our Ears, and shake off all impediments arising from our own drowinesse, or vain thoughts,

or

or distracting objects; *Encline your Eares, and come unto me: heare, and your soule shall live.* I say 53. 3. For indeed, the Preaching of the Word saveth the soule; it is able to make the soule immortall, if it be once ingrafted in us. For this

1 Pet 1.
23.

cause, the Word is called, *Incarnate Seed, that endureth for ever*, because it maketh us incorruptible and happy for ever; for he that hath his soule saved, liveth for evermore. Now would you be sharers in this unspeakable blessednesse? the Word must then be ingrafted in your hearts, this heavenly plant of the Word must be set into your understandings and affections; for when a man heareth the VVord with understanding, it entrench into the heart, as the impe into the Rocke; and when with love and affection he imbraceth it, it is closed about, that it may grow and prosper therein; but this Word cannot be ingrafted in our hearts, except the heart first be cleansed; sin must be put out, that the VVord may be ingrafted in; the filthinesse of sin, and all the sprouts of malice, must be put away: of harsh, hasty, and churlish; we must become meek,

Mat. 18.
2. 3.

milde, and gentle. The Disciples must become *like little Children*; that is, they must put away those evill affections of Envy, Pride, deceit &c. which grow upon them with yeares; otherwise, they should but follow, and heare their Master in vaine, the VVord could not be ingrafted in them to save their soules. You may see the Prophet *Isaiah* reproving the

Isa. 1. 16.

Jewes, That they came to holy duties in their sins. So that first of all, there must be a putting away the evill of their doings; and then, a comming together to heare the Lord to their comfort. No wise man will sow his Corne, or plant his delicate Fruit-trees, but will have the bryars and thornes first taken away, and whatsoever filthy Ruffe may hinder the prospering of his seed, and thriving of his plants: He will not poure Wine or Milke into filthy Vessels; Every man cleares his Table books of the old writing, when he intends to put in any new matter. Now the VVord of God is seed, the Preaching of it is a Planting, it is VVine and Milke, and a writing in the table of mens hearts; all filthinesse of sin therefore must be removed, this ground must be cleared

from

from the bryars of Anger, Hatred, &c. that the VVord may be Planted in; we must, like the Disciples, and the first Christians, leave off all, that we may attend the VVord of God; we must put away worldly things, which cause pollution in the heart; we must be like *Zachew*, who that he might heare Christ to his salvation, put away *Extortion, Bribery, and Oppression*; Or like the beleeving *Ephesians*, who put away their *curious Arts*; Or like *Saul*, who ceased from going on in his persecuting course, that he might heare Christ speaking unto him. And thus the Word is able to make our soules Immortal; for tis a great deceit, to think to retaine our sins still, and yet to heare the Word unto salvation: And if so, then what shall become of those men that set down their resolution to continue in their sins for a season, & are resolved to trade in Drunkenesse, Whoredom, Covetousnesse, &c? surely there can be no ground in such mens hearts for the Word of God to grow up to the saving of their soules; the seed may happily be sown amongst them, but it cannot possibly enter to doe them good.

Obj. But it may be objected, That if the Word cannot profit any, but such as put away all sin, it cannot then profit any man that heareth, seeing no man can so put away his sins as that his ground may be cleare?

Ans. The Answer is this, That every godly person doth cleere the ground of his heart from all sin, so as that he is not pleased with any sin, but he hates it, and himselfe for committing it: he strives against it, and he is dayly grieved, and poures forth his supplications for the pardon of it: You may look for this at your leisures upon the first of *Saint John*, the third, and third, and fifth, and eighteenth; and he that will not once put his helping hand to the removing of his sins, that he may make roome for the Word of God to be grafted in him, need never look for any comfortable event of his hearing; but having thus shaken off all impediments, all distracting objects, and hearkning unto the Word without disturbance, hearing, as it were, for our lives; thus heare, and your soules shall live.

Secondly, VVe must prove all things, and keep that which

is good, we must heare with judgement; and hearken for our selves; its ordinary with most men to heare for others, and not for themselves: but we must have a speciall care to look to that Doctrine which in particular concerns us, to lay that up in our hearts, and apply it effectually; and this is a rule of singular thrift in godlinesse, if we doe marke what sin in us the Lord reproveth, or what comfort is especially fitted to our hearts, or what direction doth chiefly concerne us; and he hath an honest memory that will be sure to keep these things, though he forget all the rest; but he hath a wretched memory, and heart too, that forgets these things, though he could repeat all the Sermon *verbatim*.

3. *After we have heard*, two things likewise must be done; First, we must by Meditation labour to make those things we have heard, and which concerns us, fast, that they slip not out of our minds; and we must take heed, that neither the Devill steale away the good seed, nor our own hearts, through negligence, lose it, the VVord being let into the heart, must settledly continue, and not be broken off by the wild beasts of vain speeches and cogitations, nor blowne out by the gusts of strong winds of Sathans temptations, or of his Instruments, that will immediately after we have heard the word, be offering other objects, for our minds to be taken up with-
Psal. 1. 2. all. *The blessed man doth not onely Reads, but Meditates upon the Word; David hid the word in his heart; even as he that hath bought a Pearle of incomparable worth hideth it: And as the Husbandman, having cast his Seed into the ground, harrowes it in; so this Heavenly Plant of the word must be set into the understanding and affections, it must enter into the heart (as before is said) like the Impe into the Stocke, and being imbraced, and closed about with love and affections, it then thrives, and grows, and prospers. David is a notable example for this, how often doth he expresse his affections to the word, in his 119. Psalme? And Saint Paul*
Rom. 7. 22 *professed, the Law to have been his delight, as it is indeed of every blessed man; for the hearing of the word is not sufficient; neither is it sufficient to keep those things we have heard*

heard for an hour; but it ought to be our delight, and our dayly worke; we should alwayes be thinking and ruminating of what we have heard, till there be a sure impression of the word in our hearts. Let then every one of us gage our soules, and try, and see whether we finde our selves to be such, as to whom the word is thus powerfull to save our soules, that we goe not on upon false grounds in our hopes, about this unspeakable blessednesse.

Doth thy heart cleave before the word Preached, through trembling and terrour, in respect of thy sins, and the sins of others? Is it ingrafted in thee? Doth it enter into thy understanding? and is it closed about with a most earnest love and affection? Doth it remaine with thee, after the hearing of it, by serious Meditation? and doth it grow? and is it vigorous in thy life, over-topping all superfluous branches of sin? then thou mayest truly comfort thy selfe, it shall undoubtedly be thy salvation. But if thine heart be hardened, and not to be moved before the word; if thy understanding be so blinded, as that thou hast no apprehension of that which is taught; if thy affections be so benumbed, as that thou art without all love unto it; if thou give way to worldly and vaine discourses, works, or sports, after thou hast heard, insomuch, that all departeth out of thy memory againe so soon as thou hast received it; if all teaching be neglected, and thou swimdest in the streame of thine owne corruptions; then look not up to the joyes of Heaven, for no part of them belongs unto thee: for though Food being eaten is able to save the life; and Apparell put on, to keep the body warme; and a Treasure possessed, to enrich a man; yet he that Feedeth not, shall be Famisht with Hunger; he that goeth Naked, shall be pinched with Cold; and he that hath wealth, and will not use it, is but a poor miserable man: so he that maketh no better use of the word, which is the onely satining Food of his Soule, his Soule shall be hunger-starved, and perish, notwithstanding all his hearing. And this is the case of most men in these times, wherein sin, and the neglect of Ordinances, hath gotten such an head, through a long continued

custome, that though the hardest Oke is cloven with wedges; and the flintiest Stone made hollow with continuall dropping of water; yet there is not one heart, amongst many, penetrated by the VVord: and if there be any trembling sometime, as it was with *Felix*, when *Paul Preached*, it is but for the present, the word is not retained, but flown from, as it was by him; so that there can be no growth of this Heavenly suckle in these mens lives; but branches of sinne will be so luxuriant, that the word will be farre over-topt by them, and kept perpetually at under. And therefore, whosoever doth desire the word to be saved thereby, let him tremble at it, and yet embrace it; let him prepare his heart better to entertaine it; let him stirre up the spirit of his mind to understand it; let him not lose such precious seed, for want of harrowing in, by due Meditation; and let him cherish it in his inward thoughts continually, that it may grow, and prosper, and more shew it selfe in his speeches, actions, and company, then those bryar-like sprouts of his owne naturall corruptions.

Secondly, we must see to it, that we be doers of the word, as well as hearers; we must not onely know, but observe and doe; for Knowledge without Pra^{ct}ice, will availle nothing; and so much of the truth as is put into pra^{ct}ice, is sure for ever, the rest may be lost; and it is a singular help to a Christian, to set upon his obedience while the Doctrine is yet fresh in his mind; for delay will compasse him about with many difficulties, and he will want those inward incitations that might stirre up his heart with power and strength to obey: And that this is the duty of every man, as well to doe, as to heare; see that in Saint James, *Now ye heare these things, blessed are ye if ye doe them.* And Saint Paul saith, *That every man shall be judged, not by his hearing, but by his doing, by his works;* Then up and be doing, every one of you, whilst time and strength permits; for not onely that Fig. tree which had no Fruit, was accursed; but that Tree likewise which brought not forth good Fruit, was to be hewen downe, and cast into the Fire, Luke 3. 9. And those who have not fed the poore,

James 1.

22.

Rom. 2. 6.

and clothed the naked, &c. will be bidden, Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, (Mat. 25. 41.) Then what shall become of those shadows and Ciphers among Christians, who place their Religion onely in hearing? surely they want all substance of grace, and being put into the Balance, as Belshazzar was, they shall certainly be found too light, when the rewarding of every one shall be according to his works; then can they expect nothing but tribulation and anguish, which shall be to every soule that doth evill. And it is to be feared, if inquisition were made, more then our common sort might be taxed for this neglect in doing, even some of those, who pretend a great deale of Zeale to the Word, and are frequent and attentive hearers, and will runne to Meetings, and make glorious shewes of Devotion, giving Religion a thousand good words; but for this duty of doing, *procul absit*. they have no heart unto it, Covetousnesse still prevails in them; and some of them, who would be thought, rare Professors, can perhaps sometimes be content to drinke a draught of Stollen Waters, as well as others, making Religion a pretext onely, the more covertly to wallow in the mire of their sins; but such Kind of Professors, what Zeale soever they may shew to the world, are but Painted Christians, beautifull onely outward; and woe unto them that are such, for notwithstanding all their glistering shewes, *they are but whited Sepulchers, and comely out sides; not like unto Christs Spouse, all glorious within, but full of rottennesse, and corruption.* But as for you, be you both hearers, and doers; alter you the course of your lives, breake off your sins, shake off the bands of Sathan, dissolve the Cloudes of your iniquities, fly wickednesse, shun evill, doe well, doe good, and aspire to such perfection in doing the will of your God, as that you may not onely cease from evill, but fill your lives with good works; and thus shall you be blessed, *ipso facto*, in the very deed; for he that doth the Word, is blessed; he is no longer under the Curse, a Vassall of wrath, and a Child of perdition; but blessed with Gods favour and love, and in the certaine way to that unspeakable happinesse that shall hereafter be revealed; But he that heareth the Word, and doth it not, deceives

deceives himselfe, cheats and cōfens his own soule, and is but a forgetfull Foole, a very Childe, and no Man ; he dallieth with the Word, as a Babe with a Looking glasse, beholding it not for any end, but to sport it selfe therewith, never intending any thing about the Face to rectifie it, or to set it in order. Saint John doth divide the whole world into two sorts of Persons ; *Qui ex Deo est non peccat ; Qui possent ex Diabolo est* : The Children of God, and the Children of the Devill ; the one hears Gods Word, the other heares it not ;

John 8.47. He that is of God, heareth Gods Word ; *Ye therefore heare it not, because ye are not of God* : And to be hearers of the Word of God, is a great pledge or testification that we are the Children of God ; especially our hearing of Gods word, being accompanied with these foure concurring Circumstances.

The first is, *Audire*, to heare the word ; *Blessed are they that heare the Word of God* : this is the first step ; and he that doth not put a Foot forward to this, he is not to be accounted a Child of God.

The second is, *Audire cum frequentia*, to heare the word frequently, and often : The Earth that is extraordinary dry, and scorched with heat ; the drops of water which it receiveth, it turneth into Toads. So he that seldome frequents Sermons, it is to be feared, they worke little good upon him, if not turne to his hurt. For the word of God is the Soules sustenance, and being Ministered slowly, it is no marvaile if the Soule not onely grow leane, but fall into a Consumption.

The third is, *Audire cum attentione*, to heare diligently, and with attention, freeing the Soule from all worldly incumbrances ; for as the Eye cannot joyntly, and at once, behold both Heaven and Earth ; so the Soule cannot attentively at one and the same time, behold the things of the world, and of God. *If any Man love the World, the love of the Father abideth not in him*. When a great and principall River is divided into many rivolets, or little streames, so much the lesse water will every one of them have : The like succeed-

eth with that Heart, which is divided into many cares and desires; *Foolish and noysome lusts, drowne men in destruction and perdition*, 1 Tim. 6. 9. And Solomon saith, *When thou sittest with a Prince, observe what is before thee: And put a Knife to thy throat, if thou beest a man given to appetite*, Prov. 23. 1. 2. A Christian sitting at the King of Heavens Table, is, the hearing of his Word, this is that board to which wisdom inviteth us, where the Bread of wholesome Doctrine is set before us, which strengthneth our hearts; and the wine of Grace, which cheereth and comforteth our Soules; at which Table, whosoever shall come to sit, must consider with attention that which is set before him, casting out of his minde all other worldly things. Those Ministers that were employed for the apprehending of our Saviour Christ, finding him Preaching to the People, they hearkned unto him with that earnest and diligent attention, that they had quite forgot to put in execution, that which was given them in charge by the Pharisees: And being demanded by them, why did ye not bring him along with you? they returned this Answer, *Never man spake like this man*. The glorious Doctor Saint *Augustine*, before that he had unwinded himselfe out of the error of the *Manichees*, he went on purpose to heare Saint *Ambrose*, but not with any intention to give any credit to his Doctrine, but onely to please his Eares with the Elegancy of his Phrase; and being ravished with the sweetnesse of his expressions, had his Heart taken as well as his Eare, his attention supplied the fault of his intention; this was that putting of a Knife to the throat. The Apostle Saint *Paul* goes a little further, and call's Gods word not onely *Cultrum*, but *Gladium*, not a Knife, but a Sword, *Take unto thee the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*, that thy Soule be not distracted with the troublesome busineses of this world, freeing it from all worldly cares and molestations.

The fourth is, *Audire cum conversatione*, to heare with a retention, and to lay up the Word in our Hearts, to locke it up in the closet of our Soules; and so, *Blessed are they*
that

that heare the Word of God, and keep it. The Physician despaires of that Patients Stomacke, that cannot keep its meat, but throwes it up, as soon as it receives it. So he that heares a Sermon, should retire himselfe into his Chamber, and there imprint it in his memory. Many take no pleasure in Flowers, or care any further for them, then to look upon them, to smell at them, and to have them in their Hands while they are sweet and fresh, and lovely, and then throw them by; but the Bee drawes from them both honey and wax: So, many heares Sermons for pleasure, for delicacy of words, for gravity of Sentences, and for gracefullnesse in the delivery; but this is but to make a Nosegay to smell at for a while, and presently to cast it away; but we must heare with retention; we must seale it up in the coffers of our Remembrance; For blessed are they that heare the Word of God, and keep it.

And now, having learnt how to behave our selves in the House of the Lord our God, in his Publick Service and Worship, and particularly how to comport our selves in the Hearing of the Word, both to our Comfort, and Profit; We come now to the greatest, and the most excellent service that God requires of us, and that is Prayer, which is that very Art of Arts that adorne a Christian. And David saith, That the holinesse of the Temple, consisted in the Prayers, which then had their force there. And here you see, That the Assembly gathered into the House of the Lord, (their exercise there) is, Sighing, Sobbing, Praying, Crying; Cry unto the Lord. And to this, the Angels whet on our diligence; and the Lord himselfe, by Prayer, permits us familiarly to poure out our hearts before him; for Prayer is nothing else but an opening of our hearts in the presence of God, and the best remedy we have to releev our cares, anguishes, miseries, oppressions, and troubles, is, to lay them all up in his bosome; Cast thy burthen upon the Lord, saith David, and he shall nourish thee. And therefore, whensoever we feeble our selves deprived of Gods benefits towards us, whensoever we finde a want, or a withholding of Gods wonted favour and mercy from us, by

reason of our sins; whensoever the height of our sinnes, brings downe the weight of Gods Judgement upon us, whether it be by Plague, Famine, Warre, or any other calamity, let us run to *this House*, and importune the God of glory, and compassion, for this is the onely businesse of this *Fast*, and of *this Solemne Meeting*; which brings us to the last Circumstance in the Method, or Order, *And cry unto the Lord.*

Good cause had all this People to sigh, and weep, and cry continually, for their Land was ruffled with a blood-lesse Famine: And for us of this Land, *How hath the Lord darkened the Daughter of Zion in his wrath and hath cast downe the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his foot-stoole in the day of his wrath? He hath cut off in his fierce wrath all the horne of Israel; he hath drawne backe his right hand, and a Fire was kindled in Jacob, which devoured round about; he hath bent his Bow like an Enemy, his right hand was stretched out as an Adversary; He hath despised in the indignation of his wrath, the King and the Priest.* So that well may we take up a lamentation, such as was not in the dayes of our Fathers; for alas, no lamentation can proportion our affliction, so that a Deluge of Teares, is little enough for the Ocean of our miseries. Let then sorrow be our individuall companion, with this we begun, with this let us end; nay, never let us make an end of mourning for the abominations of this Land; and let us all learne that last lesson of our Saviour, to weep for our selves, to weep for our sins. And for this cause, I shall still leade you on with paces of lamentation to the House of mourning, where we are to cry unto the Lord.

We will stay no longer to look upon the behaviour of this People, *whose teares did not onely runne downe like a River Day and Night; but their very Hearts cryed unto the Lord. They poured forth their Hearts like Water before the face of the Lord; they lifted up their Hands towards him for the lives of their young Children, that fainted for hunger in the Corners of all their Streets; the services they brought*

Lamcn. 2.
1. &c.

unto the Lord were not onely Prayers, but Teares ; they did not onely Pray, but Cry. And since we have so sinned, and have been so punished, doth it not now concern us ? and is it not now high time for us to betake our selves unto this Sanctuary of Prayer ? nay, what manner of Prayers should we now send up to Heaven ? surely not such, as most what we use to make, such cold, and frigid ones, as if they were onely for fashion sake, and as if there were an indifference in us, whether or no they found acceptance from the Lord ; and People that are in the fiery Furnace of affliction, under the torrid Zone of Heavens indignation, to be so luke-warme ; nay, so very cold in their Devotions ; what doth this argue, but either desperation, that their praying is to no purpose ; or else mindlesnesse under the heavy hand of God ? whereas there is no better meanes for the removing of this Hand, then Prayer : For what sin doeth, Prayer undoeth, especially fervent Prayer. Therefore the sins of our Nation being so great, and loud, as that the cry of them hath brought downe such horrible Vengeance upon us ; who can tell whether the cry of humble Prayer unto God for mercy, may not yet enter into his Eares ; For this reason, *Let us cry unto the Lord.*

And as we must thus imitate their behaviour in misery ; so the next is, their Remedy, which likewise must be ours ; *They cast their burthen upon the Lord*, knowing full well, *that he was able to help them, being the Lord* ; and as willing, as able, *because their God*. In treating of which, the utmost of my intent shall be, to divide such shares of sorrow among you, as that your very soules may be even cut asunder within you ; being indeed, *your onely remedy in trouble*, and the onely way to appease your angry God ; *for the broken and contrite heart, he will not despise*. And therefore, let us sigh, and weep, and cry unto the Lord.

As the cause of this Peoples misery, was *Famine* ; so their case, in regard of any Earthly succour that could be expected, was helplesse, and remedilesse ; *For the Heavens were become as Brasse, and the Earth as Iron unto them*, the
 Lord

Lord their God, who comprehends all in his Fist, had withheld from them the bottles of Heaven, and stopped the spouts of Raine; now being ready to dye with hunger, they mingle their Bread with weeping, seeking to relieve themselves by tears and groans; *And cry unto the Lord.* Hence the Point is this.

That godly sorrow, and holy affliction, is the best remedy Obs.
in any sorrow and affliction, whether it be from Men, from
Sathan, or from God himselfe: whether it be in Body, Estate,
Name, Mind, or soule of a Man; whether it be on parti-
cular Persons, or on our Selves, or on our Friends, or those
that are about us, or on the whole Land, as on Church, or
Common wealth; This is the most soveraigne Remedy in
all distresse, and extremity whatsoever; this inward godly
griefe, is a salve for every sore, and a playster for every
wound: To Weep, and Cry, and poure out our Hearts
before God, is the course that this people here took, and
that which we must take in the like, or any other calamity:
and according to the measure of the affliction, and as it is
more publick, or private, so must be the measure of our
lamentation. To this, there is a promise made in *Isaiah, Isa. 61. 1.*
That when our Hands cannot help our selves, nor our *2. 3.*
Tongues prevaile with others; yet then we may relieve
our selves by our Prayers unto God; for in that place the
Lord undertaketh, that Mourners shall be comforted.

And these is great cause why God should so deale with such kind of Persons. For first, He is full of pittie and compassion; and therefore the Prophet Joel, bids us, *Repent* *Joel 2. 13.*
our Hearts, and not our Garments: that is, bring inward sorrow, that may crush and breake the Heart, and then turne unto the Lord; which if we doe, we shall be sure of reliefe; *because the Lord is mercifull* (saith he) *and our God is ready to forgive.* When we see our Children weeping, mourning, and confessing their faults, we cannot but have our bowels of compassion earning towards them; what shall we then thinke of God? He is our Father, we are his Children, and he is farre more mercifull then we can be,

for he hath no other bowels, then the bowels of compassion; and therefore when we Mourne in an holy manner, certainly he will arise, and have mercy upon us; he cannot stay, when he sees our Eyes full of Teares, and our Hearts full of sorrow, for the sighs and groanes of his people will not let him have rest in Heaven.

Secondly, This godly mourning must needs be a speciall remedy in all manner of afflictions, because it makes our Prayers very forcible; it sets an edge upon our Petitions, and makes us pray heartily, fervently, and strongly. *When* *Hof. 12. 4.* *Jacob wept in his Prayer, it was so effectuell, that he prevailed.* When Gods people joyned together to poure forth buckets full of Teares drawne from the bottome of their Hearts before the Lord, they were marvellously helped; for the great measure of their Teares, made their supplication more fervent. And therefore when our Saviour was about the principall point of his Mediatorship, then did he gather strength unto himselfe by this means, *He did offer up Prayers with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, Heb. 5. 7.* *1 Sam. 7. 6.*

Thirdly, This godly sorrow must needs be very effectuell, because it is exceeding forcible against sin; for when sorrow comes into the Heart, sin goes out, it will not lodge there, unlesse it be cockered, and much made of. When every one laments his iniquity, and mourns over Christ Jesus, whom by his finnes he hath pierced, then there is a Fountaine opened to wash us all from our sins, that have made a wicked separation betwixt us and our God. And seeing then that this godly sorrow is a means to make God pittie us and to make us call earnestly upon him, and to expell sin, which might hinder us from prevailing with him, it must needs follow That of all remedies in time of distresse, this is the best and surest.

Since sorrow is our onely safety, and the best and surest remedy in distresse; Let us a little reflect upon our selves and miseries and apply this soveraigne Balme to all our wounds. There are many afflictions abroad at Sea, Ships taken

taken, Merchants spoyled, goods seized, Marriners imprisoned ; many at home, in our Townes, nay, in our owne Families, as losses, crosses, sicknesses, diseases, parting with friends, discontents ; nay, there are many things amisse in our owne Hearts, and here is medicine for every one of our maladies. Let us then get it, and use it, and all arguments and helps that may continue and increase it. Thus the *Ninevites*, when *Jonah* threatned destruction against their City within *forty dayes* ; they humbled, and abased themselves and fell to mourning, and used Fasting to help it forward ; and to further them to this remorse and griefe for their great and hainous transgressions : they had grieved the Lord by their iniquities, and therefore now they would grieve themselves with contrition for them, and neglect no means to further them in the worke of humiliation ; *They* Jonah 3.
Proclaime a Fast, they put on Sackcloth from the greatest to the least ; they neither eat nor drinke ; they cry mightily unto God, and every man turnes from his evil way and from the wickednesse that is in their hands : And when God saw that they turned from their evil wayes, then God repented of the evil that he said he would doe unto them, and he did it not. And since we of this Nation have seen and felt affliction, and justly may feare danger to be neer us still ; let us betake our selves to this mourning ; if we refuse to doe it, and shall continue to be hard-hearted ; suppose the devouring, blood-letting Sword should come againe into our Land ; suppose the Plague like a loaden sponge should come flying through our Townes and Countries, sprinkling poyson wheresoever she comes ; suppose pale, meager Famine should come, which is the very Engine of destruction, and brings terrour to mortalls, death to all things : Are not we likely to be taken away with any of these, and to have, for our bodies onely, but our soules in danger also, and that, of Gods wrath and everlasting displeasure ? Let us therefore seek to have our hearts mollified by this excellent meanes, and for this end the better to move us ; let us consider of the blessings which God hath been pleased plentifully to
 poure

Nehem. 9.

poure downe upon this people, as they did in the day of
 their humiliation, of whom *Nehemiah* makes mention. Let
 us likewise seriously recount how many mercies we have
 enjoyed, and how much they have been abused; how many
 afflictions we have felt, and how little we have been bet-
 terd; how many deliverances we have had, and yet how
 carelesse, nay, how rebellious we have been, notwithstanding
 them all. Let us weigh with our selves, what hurt our
 sins have done unto us; how many good things they have
 turned from us, and how many evils they have pull'd
 upon us; and above all, let us remember what a huge
 weight, and multitude of miseries, they have brought up-
 on our Saviour; namely, debasement, and humiliation, ex-
 change of the greatest glory, for the greatest infamy, sor-
 rows and sufferings, assaults and temptations, the heavy
 burthen of our guiltinesse, and the grievous punishment
 due for our desert, the rage and violence of most malici-
 ous men, and the wrath and displeasure of the most righte-
 ous God, torments of Body, and terrors of soule, and death
 it selfe, a painefull death, a shamefull death, and a cursed
 death. And because commonly sad spectacles call sorrow
 before it come; let us look back againe upon that severe
 whip of Gods Justice, the late Scourge of these three
 Lands; and imagine you see your Children slaine before
 your Eyes, ones Head off, anothers Arme, a third crying
 unto you, and the little one hanging upon you, and then
 tell me, if it be not high time to weep and mourne with
 them of *Ziglag*, whose soules were grieved, and they wept,
*till they could weep no more, every man for his Sons, and
 for his Daughters.* 1 Sam. 30. 4. 6. But especially to lament
 for our sins of all things else most hurtfull to man, un-
 dermining our soules, and drawing destruction after them,
 unsheathing Gods Sword, and violently forcing him to his
 Armory, to put on the Garments of vengeance, as *Isaiah*
 speaketh. And as thus the Castropes of our sins have hur-
 ried downe Gods Judgements upon us, and have cryed to
 God for vengeance; so now, let our miseries cry unto him
 for

for mercy; and let us implore Gods gracious power, and that with an howling lamentation, to stay his further threatened (and justly merited) punishments, from any more displaying horror throughout our Nation: And for this purpose, let us weep, and sob, and sigh, and cry mightily unto the Lord our God: And the more sorrow, the better for us, for such moisture will dissolve the clouds of our iniquities; and the more showers of griefe fall from our Eyes and Hearts, the clearer and fairer will the wayes of our Hearts be for the feet of the Lord to walke in. Let us then follow the Apostles councell, *Suffer affliction, sorrow, and weep*: James 4. 9 And if any thing keep us from this mourning, away with it; Let our laughter be turned into mourning, and our joy into heavinesse; for we cannot cast downe our selves so low, but God will raise us up againe. Seeing then sorrow is the onely Antidote and Sovereigne Remedy for all our poysonous Diseases; let there be weeping, and crying in every Towne, in every Street, in every House, in every Chamber, *Cry unto the Lord.*

Obj. But perhaps some will say, Is Godly griefe a Salve for all Sores, a Remedy for all Diseases: Suppose Warre, as lately it did, should againe thunder in this Land? Surely, to weep, and lament in the time of Warre, is no signe of Manhood; it rather argues, that Men are faint-hearted, want courage and fortitude; so that this wringing and wayling, is altogether unbecoming the person of a Man of Valour: let us therefore trust in God, and be stout, and of a good courage, and never mourne for the matter?

Ans. Doth it argue want of Courage, to lament for sinne? It rather argues want of Faith, not to lament for sinne. What doe you thinke of Jacob, was he a Coward? you cannot say so of him; for the holy Ghost gives him this commendation, *That he had strength and courage not onely to prevayle against men, but with the Angel of the Covenant.* (Gen 32. 28.) And his conflikt was, *he Wept, and Prayed.* So that that which we thinke weaknesse, the Scripture calls strength; *For by his strength he had power with God,*

God, (Hosea 12. 3. 4.) What doe you thinke of David, was he a Coward? there is none, I thinke, will so disgrace that worthy and renowned Captaine of the Lord of Hosts: And yet he himselfe in his *Psalmes*, often makes mention of his Teares, and sayes, *That he watered his couch with his teares: and that his Eyes did gush out with Rivers of teares.* What will ye say to all Gods People, of whom it is said, *That they should mourne as they did for Josiah, in the Valley of Hadadrimmon?* and as one mourneth for his First-borne, the onely Heyre and hope of the Family. Will you condemne all Gods people for a generation of Cowards? nay, this is so farre from bewraying any want of Courage, that we may boldly say, That when men are fullest of such Teares, then are they fullest of Fortitude. What shall we thinke of the Lord Jesus Christ, had he no Heart? was he destitute of Courage? that could not possibly be: And yet, when he was to exercise the fulnesse of his Power, to undertake such a worke, as no creature durst attempt; when he was to offer up himselfe to his Father, as a Sacrifice for the sins of the World; when he was to encounter the Lords wrath, and his justice; the Devill, Death, Hell, and Damnation, and all the Powers of Darkenesse, that same time, *he Wept, and that abundantly:* And I hope none will say, that then our Saviours strength fayled him, notwithstanding his bitter Tears and Cryes. Surely those that doe not weep when there is cause, they are without Heart, and utterly voyd of true Valour, and subject to marvellous fears and violent distempers, which arise from a base mind. For what is the reason they are so afraid of Death? but because they have not mourned for their sinnes, and so removed the sting of Death, which if they had done, they would then triumph over Death; and say with Saint Paul, *O Death where is thy sting?* (1 Cor. 15. 55.) their hearts would then stand fast, as the strong mountains, and not be afraid of any evil tidings, *No nor of the Pestilence that walketh in the darke; nor of the Plague that destroyeth in noon-day,* Psal. 91. 6.

Againe, Since sorrow is our onely safety, This makes exceedingly for the comfort of those that are Mourners in *Sion*; they are in favour with God, and out of the reach of all danger: so that nothing can befall them for hurt. *Blessed are they that mourne*, saith Christ, *for they shall be comforted*, Matth. 5. 4. More happy is the poor man that weeps for his sinne, then the greatest Potentate that rejoyceth in abundance.

And though we have cause enough of sorrow, if we should stay to looke into the Calendar of these dayes, and see and find the finnes of this Land to be aspiring finnes; to see Drinking, Chearing, Whoring, Swearing, as common as Breathing; which though they may be wincked at by the Eyes of Men; yet are they crying in the Eares of God. But to passe by these, and likewise Covetousnesse, Oppression, whose Houses filled by cruelty and deceit, Extortion of the Rich, Wantonnesse of some, and Profanenesse of all, enough to sit every Pious soule in Mourning, for the miseries of *England*: And to look onely upon the wofull divisions amongst us touching matters of Religion, not meddling at all with that remnant of *Baal*, I meane, our Papists; though, me thinks, its strange, that after so long Preaching of the Gospel, there should be still such an inundation of Popery; nor with our hollow-hearted hypocrites; nor with the Atheists of our times, who neither seek the Lord, nor enquire after him. Let us onely look upon our new Apostates, and see what numberlesse numbers are carried away from true Religion to Fancies: yet I reckon these Separists to be ours, however they may be somewhat Sun-burnt, Tand, and Tackt with private Opinions, (though I hope the cloth is sound, they yet hold fast the Foundation;) but runne through the Streets of every Towne, and you shall scarce meet with two of one Opinion, and yet all would be thought Religious, and admired for Holinesse; by which meanes, the seamelesse Coat of Christ is miserably rent and torne, and too many (God grant they prove not irreparable) divisions are in this poor

Reuben. O how should thoughts of these things open the very fountains of sorrow, and cause Teares to trickie downe all cheekes, that the Children should take delight in the Mothers ruine, and Rayes of the glorious Gospel should suffer such dismall Eclipses by the strange and unheard of interpositions of those that would be deemed the onely Professours and lovers of It : For surely there can be no greater cause of lamentation, then the miseries and calamities of Gods poor distressed Church and People. Hence the Point shall be this.

That the greatest affliction that should touch the Hearts of Gods People, should be the affliction of his Church and People; this of all others goes neerest the Hearts of the Saints. For this, see *Jeremies Lamentation*, for the judgements of God on his Church, and on *Ierusalem* his owne City, and for the misery and calamity that lay upon the whole State; see them thus bewayling their heavy case; *Mine Eye casteth out Rivers of Water, for the destruction of the Daughter of my People : Mine Eye droppeth without stay, and seasoneth not; Mine Eye breaketh my Heart, because of all the Daughters of my City.* For when Gods Inheritance was spoiled, some put to the Sword, others led Captive, the Temple of God rized, and the exercises of Religion abolished; this was it that wrought upon *Jeremiah*, and made him to grieve, and breake forth into these wishes, *O that my Head were full of Water, and mine Eyes a Fountaine of Teares, that I might weep Day and Night, for the Sins of the Daughter of my People.* (*Jerem. 9. 1.*) as if he could not have his fill, nor weep enough for the desolations of *Zion*, and the miserable overthrow thereof, which he fore-saw. And this was it that went neer the Heart of good *Nehemiah*, who being in great prosperity, Cur-bearer to the mightiest Monarch in the World, and in speciall favour with him; yet for the affliction and reproach wherein the Church of God was, he conceivd such inward sorrow, *That he was sad in the Kings presence*, which was a thing, that he must, and would have forborne, if possibly he could. *Moses* goes fur-

*Lament. 3.
48. 49. &c.*

Neh. 1. 4.

*Neh. m. 1.
1. 2.*

ther

then, He doth not onely Mourn, but is content to lay downe his prosperity, and to expose his Estate to a manifest overthrow, so that he might help forward the deliverance of the afflicted Israelites, and save them from the hands of their Oppressours: For he knew he could not be in favour with Pharaoh, if he should joyne with them, whom he so cruelly handled; But he chose rather to suffer affliction with the People of God, then to be called the Sonne of Pharaohs Daughter. Esther seems to goe somewhat beyond him, for she resolves with her selfe (for the cause of the Jewes, who were all appointed to slaughter) to adventure her life in going to the King in their behalfe; *I will goe, saith she, though it be contrary to the Law, and if I perish, I perish*, Esther 4. 16. and God blessed her boldnesse with an happy successe; she saw the deliverance of her People, and the confusion of her Enemies. But our Lord Jesus Christ goes beyond them all, for when he was in supream excellency, he was so affected with the woefull case of his Elect, into which they had brought themselves by their owne rebellions against him; that he humbled himselfe, and took on him the forme of a Servant, and submitted himselfe to many sorrowes, disgraces, and sufferings; not onely while he lived, but principally at his Death, that so he might deliver his People from the wrath to come, and from Eternall Death, which they had deserved and must have otherwise endured: But for prooffe, enough; if you will have Reasons, take these three.

First, There is great Reason why the affliction of the Church, and People of God should so affect us; In regard of the Communion that is betwixt God and them; For they are called the Lords Flocke, his chiefe Treasure under Heaven, his First-borne, yea, the very Apple of his Eye; and therefore being so deare unto the Lord, they should be deare unto us; and we should have a tender care over them, and mourne in our hearts for any evill that befalls them, as Jeremy did, *That the Lords Flocke should goe into Captivity*.

K 2

Secondly,

Secondly, There is great Reason *why the affliction of the Church should so affect us*. In regard of the Communion that is betwixt them and us; for we are their members, and neerer then bodily members: And surely we should have greater care of the whole Church, then of our selves, because it more concerns Gods glory; and yet in caring for them, we care for our selves too, and in labouring to prevent their afflictions, we prevent our owne, and in weeping for others miseries, we get Armour of proofe that will keep off misery from our selves. And that there is no danger in thus doing for the servants of God, may appeare in *Exodus*; one would have thought that there had been some great mischief toward *Moses* and *Aaron*, when they must fetch out of *Egypt* such a People, from such a King, not onely by Petition, but by command and threatning, *If he would not let them goe*; one would have imagined that *Pharab*, a proud man, would never have endured this at their hands; and yet, if ye will trace them, though you may find them in perill, yet you shall find them of all others the most safe.

Thirdly, There is great Reason, *why the affliction of the Church should so affect us*, and must needs so worke upon our Hearts, because of the insultations and triumphs of the wicked against them, when they cry out, *Where is now their God?* And this was it which *Moses* did urge to move God to spare his People, when he threatned to destroy them for their Idolatry, *He intreats God to remember his great name, and to spare them, lest the Egyptians should say That he had brought them out maliciously to slay them in the Mountaines, and to consume them from the Earth, or that he was not able to bring them into the Land of Canaan*. This is it that goes to the Heart of the Faithfull, when they heare prophane Persons reviling the Host of the Living God: O these are they (say they) that stand so much for the exercises of Religion; and for comeliness of Order in the Church, doe we not see that their exercises of Religion are abolished? and that they themselves,

*Exod. 32.
Et. 12.*

some

some cut off by the Sword, some Exiled, and the most of them pittifully pinched with poverty and necessity? These, and the like despightfull and bitter speeches, doe wound the very Hearts of such as love Gods glory, and desire the prosperity of his Saints, and so cause them much to bewaile the tribulation of the Church.

Seeing that the greatest Afflictions which should touch the Hearts of Gods People, is *the affliction of the Church*. First, Then all carelesse Persons are to be reprov'd, who, so it goe well with themselves, regard not the Church at all, let it sinke or swim, all is one to them, so they may be free from danger, and sit quiet in their owne Houses, whatsoever becomes of others, they regard not; *They Drinke Wine in Bowles; but no Man is sorry for the afflictions of Joseph.* (Amos 6. 6.) This was a great fault in the late times of our unhappy Warres, when the Sword devoured, and many Christians were taken away, and smitten downe on every side; yet the most of us did Eat, and Drink, and were Merry, as if all things then went well with us: The fault is little amended in these dayes; for though we know that many of our Brethren are in Exile, some Imprisoned, others in Disgrace, many in Penury and want, and perhaps men of farre better Parts then our selves; yet if we can but satiate our selves under our owne Vines and Fig-trees, it matters not what becomes of others, never once troubled at other Mens miseries; but this argues Strange infidelity, and is such a sinne, as the Lord will pursue even unto Death, if it be not reformed. See the threatening of the Prophet *Isaiah*. In that day, (saith he) did the Lord God of Hosts call unto weeping, and Mourning, to Balaam, and girding with Sackcloth. But behold, Ioy and Gladnesse, slaying Oxen, and killing Sheep, Eating Flesh, and Drinking Wine; Eating and Drinking, for to morrow we shall dye. And it was declared in the Eares of the Lord of Hosts. (but what followes thereupon?) surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you till ye dye, saith the Lord of Hosts, Isa. 22. 12, 13, 14. We had need

need them redresse such things as are so dangerous to the whole Land.

Secondly, There is a greater fault then this ; For many doe not onely walke securely in the affliction of their Brethren, but desire the continuance and increase of it, in hope that they shall enlarge their Possessions, and better their Estates by other mens harmes ; but surely those who have but a glimpse of Christianity in them, would rather wish the well-fare of others, then desire and thirst to live upon their spoyles.

Thirdly, There are a sort which are worse then these, who come justly under this reproofe ; and such are they as long for strifes, and mutinies, and insurrections ; of this sort are they, who under any Government of Church or State, Cry, Downe with Magistrates, and downe with Preachers. Of this sort likewise are those who cry out of too much Plenty, as a stop to their greedy desire of Gaine ; and of this sort also are they that murmur and repine at the Rich, and multiply speeches of discontentment, because Wealth (say they) is unequally shifted, and therefore desire that Tumults may arise, that they may get provision from such as fall into their Hands ; but these have bloody Hearts.

Fourthly, There are yet worse then these, who doe not onely wish for such troubles on Church and Commonwealth before they come ; but rejoyce at them when they are come : and when others Eyes are full of Tears, their Mouthes are full of Laughter. As *Jeremy* chargeth the *Moabites*, He magnified himselfe against the Lord : *Moab shall wallow in his vomit, and he also shall be in derision. For diddest not thou deride Israel, as though he had been found among thieves ? for when thou speakest of him, thou art moved.* This was there manner of dealing, and this is the property of all such wicked *Moabites*, they cannot speake of the calamities of the Faithfull, but they are wonderfull affected with joy ; these have cruell hearts, and shall be met withall as *Moab* was.

*Jer. 48.
26. 27.*

Fifthly,

Fifthly, There are a sort that are still worse then these, who not onely rejoyce at the troubles, but at the sins of those that are religiously affected; and if they slip through infirmity, and fall into any sin, they are as glad, as if they had gotten a Kingdome, and came home in triumph.

Lastly, There is a sixth sort that are worse then all these; one higher degree then any I named yet; which is, When men are so farre from grieving, that it goes ill with Gods servants, that if they be somewhat amisse, they will make them worse, and help forward their misery; and for this end, incense and mis-informe such against them, as they know will inflict punishments upon them; and all these severall sorts have of late been, and still are, Thornes in our Eyes, and Prieks in our sides, billowes and brands of Sedition; and few there are but have shared in some of these common calamities. O that all these severall sorts and companies, were become strangers to our Land; but I passe them, as fellowes not worth any longer saluting.

The second is an Use of Comfort; *For if the afflictions of the Church, of all other afflictions, doe usest the Hearts of Gods Children*; Then surely this is for great comfort unto them that can mourne for the Calamities of the Church; For this is a notable testimony, that they are feeling members, and have in them the life of Christianity, when others troubles are theirs, others losses theirs, others reproaches theirs, others sufferings theirs, and when any distresses, and straits of others are made theirs. And they that thus lament for *Sion*, shall be comforted with *Sion*; God hath promised them singular consolation, it is their Portion, and they may confidently expect it.

But it may be demanded, *If Sorrow be our onely safety, and best Remedy in misery and trouble; How long must we continue our humiliation, our sorrow, our mourning, our crying?*

The Answer shall be this, Never cease mourning, till God cease afflicting; never make an end of crying, till God make an end of punishing; never cease Humiliation,

on, till God give Consolation. When the Lord minisheth unto us occasion of Griefe, let us never cease untill he againe revive our Hearts; we must not begin in the Spirit, and end in the Flesh; but having a good entrance, we must goe on with our worke, and bring it to perfection; and if God give us an heart to mourne, set to it, and never give over, till he set us free. Hence the Point shall be this.

That we should never make an end of Mourning and Weeping, till God make an end of afflicting and scourging. For this, Looke upon *Jeremy*, and see him never making an end of Weeping; *Mine Eye* (saith he) *droppeth without stay, and ceaseth not, till the Lord looke downe and behold from Heaven. Mine Eye breaketh my heart,* Lam. 3. 49 &c. And so he exhorteth the People; *Let teares runne downe like a River Day and Night, take thee no rest, neither let the Apple of thine Eye cease. Arise, Cry in the Night, in the beginning of the Watches, poure out thine Heart like Water before the Face of the Lord,* Lam. 2. 18. 19. But for Prooofe, enough.

If you will have Examples for this continued sorrow and mourning, Then first take theirs who are mentioned in *Nehemiah*, *Who Wept at the Hearing of the Law, till they were bid to rejoyce.* It was a notable commendation of that People, that they would not leave off, till they had warrant to leave off. The next shall be *Mordecai*, who when *Queene Esther* sent him Garments to Clothe him, and would have his Sackcloth to be taken from him, *he would not receive them, but humbled himselfe so long, till he was assured of deliverance.* The third shall be *Jacob*, *who would never let goe his hold, but still wrestled with the Angel, and continued weeping and praying, till he obtained a blessing.* The last shall be the *Wetran of Canaan*, *who stuck so close to her businesse, and was so importunate with Christ for her Daughter, and would never desist, nor let her Suit fall, till she had prevailed with our Saviour.* I might produce you a cloud of witnesses; but these shall serve.

And

Publick Sorrow.

57

season of our sins; whensoever the height of our sinnes, brings downe the weight of Gods Judgement upon us, whether it be by Plague, Famine, Warre, or any other calamity, let us run to *this House*, and importune the God of glory, and compassion, for this is the onely businesse of this *Fast*, and of this *Solemne Meeting*; which brings us to the last Circumstance in the Method, or Order, *And cry unto the Lord.*

Good cause had all this People to sigh, and weep, and cry continually, for their Land was ruffled with a blood-lie Famine: And for us of this Land, *How hath the Lord* Lamen. 2.
1. &c. *darkened the Daughter of Zion in his wrath, and hath cast downe the beauty of Israel, and remembered not his foot-stoole in the day of his wrath? He hath cut off in his fierce wrath all the horne of Israel; he hath drawne backe his right hand, and a Fire was kindled in Jacob, which devoured round about; he hath bent his Bow like an Enemy, his right hand was stretched out as an Adversary; He hath despised in the indignation of his wrath, the King and the Priest.* So that well may we take up a lamentation, such as was not in the dayes of our Fathers; for alas, no lamentation can proportion our affliction, so that a Deluge of Teares, is little enough for the Ocean of our miseries. Let then sorrow be our individuall companion, with this we begun, with this let us end; nay, never let us make an end of mourning for the abominations of this Land; and let us all learne that last lesson of our Saviour, to weep for our selves, to weep for our sins. And for this cause, I shall still leade you on with paces of lamentation to the House of mourning, where we are to cry unto the Lord.

We will stay no longer to look upon the behaviour of this People, whose teares did not onely runne downe like a River Day and Night; but their very Hearts cryed unto the Lord. They poured forth their Hearts like Water before the face of the Lord; they lifted up their Hands towards him for the lives of their young Children, that fainted for hunger in the Corners of all their Streets; the services they brought

unto the Lord were not onely Prayers, but Teares ; they did not onely Pray, but Cry. And since we have so sinned, and have been so punished, doth it not now concern us ? and is it not now high time for us to betake our selves unto this Sanctuary of Prayer ? nay, what manner of Prayers should we now send up to Heaven ? surely not such, as most what we use to make, such cold, and frigid ones, as if they were onely for fashion sake, and as if there were an indifference in us, whether or no they found acceptance from the Lord ; and People that are in the fiery Furnace of affliction, under the torrid Zone of Heavens indignation, to be so luke-warme ; nay, so very cold in their Devotions ; what doth this argue, but either desperation, that their praying is to no purpose ; or else mindlesnesse under the heavy hand of God ? whereas there is no better meanes for the removing of this Hand, then Prayer : For what sin doeth, Prayer undoeth, especially fervent Prayer. Therefore the sins of our Nation being so great, and loud, as that the cry of them hath brought downe such horrible Vengeance upon us ; who can tell whether the cry of humble Prayer unto God for mercy, may not yet enter into his Eares ; For this reason, Let us cry unto the Lord.

And as we must thus imitate their behaviour in misery ; so the next is, their Remedy, which likewise must be ours ; They cast their burthen upon the Lord ; knowing full well, that he was able to help them, being the Lord ; and as willing, as able, because their God. In treating of which, the utmost of my intent shall be, to divide such shares of sorrow among you, as that your very soules may be even cut asunder wthin you ; being indeed, your onely remedy in trouble. and the onely way to appease your angry God ; for the broken and contrite heart, he will not despise. And therefore, let us sigh, and weep, and cry unto the Lord.

As the cause of this Peoples misery, was Famine ; so their ease, in regard of any Earthly succour that could be expected, was helplesse, and remedilesse ; For the Heavens were become as Brasse, and the Earth as Iron unto them, the

Lord

Lord their God, who comprehends all in his Fist, had withheld from them the bottles of Heaven, and stopped the spouts of Raine; now being ready to dye with hunger, they mingle their Bread with weeping, seeking to relieve themselves by tears and groans; *And cry unto the Lord.* Hence the Point is this.

That godly sorrow, and boly affliction, is the best remedy Obs.
in any sorrow and affliction, whether it be from Men, from Satan, or from God himselfe whether it be in Body, Estate, Name, Mind, or soule of a Man; whether it be on particular Persons, or on our Selves, or on our Friends, or those that are about us, or on the whole Land, as on Church, or Common wealth; This is the most soveraigne Remedy in all distresse, and extremity whatsoever; this inward godly griefe, is a salve for every sore, and a playster for every wound: To Weep, and Cry, and poure out our Hearts before God, is the course that this people here took, and that which we must take in the like, or any other calamity: and according to the measure of the affliction, and as it is more publick, or private, so must be the measure of our lamentation. To this, there is a promise made in Isaiah, Isa. 61. 1. That when our Hands cannot help our selves, nor our Tongues prevaile with others; yet then we may relieve our selves by our Prayers unto God; for in that place the Lord undertaketh, that Mourners shall be comforted.

And there is great cause why God should so deale with such kind of Persons. For first, He is full of pittie and compassion; and therefore the Prophet Joel, bids us, *Rent* Joel 2. 13. *our Hearts, and not our Garments:* that is, bring inward sorrow, that may crush and breake the Heart, and then turne unto the Lord; which if we doe, we shall be sure of reliefe; *because the Lord is mercifull* (saith he) *and our God is ready to forgive.* When we see our Children weeping, mourning, and confessing their faults, we cannot but have our bowels of compassion-earning towards them; what shall we then thinke of God? He is our Father, we are his Children, and he is farre more mercifull then we can be,

for he hath no other bowels, then the bowels of compassion; and therefore when we Mourne in an holy manner, certainly he will arise, and have mercy upon us; he cannot stay, when he sees our Eyes full of Teares, and our Hearts full of sorrow, for the sighs and groanes of his people will not let him have rest in Heaven.

Secondly, This godly mourning must needs be a speciall remedy in all manner of afflictions, because it makes our Prayers very forcible; it sets an edge upon our Petitions, and makes us pray heartily, fervently, and strongly *When* *Hes. 12. 4.* Jacob *weps in his Prayer, it was so effectually, that he prevailed.* When Gods people joyned together to poure forth buckets full of Teares drawne from the bottome of their *1 Sam. 7. 6.* Hearts before the Lord, they were marvellously helped; for the great measure of their Teares, made their supplication more fervent. And therefore when our Saviour was about the principall point of his Mediatorship, then did he gather strength unto himselfe by this means, *He did offer up Prayers with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, Heb. 5. 7.*

Thirdly, This godly sorrow must needs be very effectual, because it is exceeding forcible against sin: for when sorrow comes into the Heart, sin goes out, it will not lodge there, unlesse it be cockered, and much made of. When every one laments his iniquity, and mourns over Christ Jesus, whom by his sinnes he hath pierced, then there is a Fountaine opened to wash us all from our sins, that have made a wicked separation betwixt us and our God. And seeing then that this godly sorrow is a means to make God pittie us, and to make us call earnestly upon him, and to expell sin, which might hinder us from prevailling with him, it must needs follow That of all remedies in time of distresse this is the best and surest.

Since sorrow is our onely safety, and the best and surest remedy in distresse; Let us a little reflect upon our selves and miseries and apply this soveraigne Balme to all our wounds. There are many afflictions abroad at Sea, Ships take

taken, Merchants spoyled, goods seized, Marriners imprisoned; many at home, in our Townes, nay, in our owne Families, as losses, crosses, sicknesses, diseases, parting with friends, discontents; nay, there are many things amisse in our owne Hearts, and here is medicine for every one of our maladies. Let us then get it, and use it, and all arguments and helps that may continue and increase it. Thus the *Ninevites*, when *Jonah* threatned destruction against their City within *forty dayes*; they humbled, and abased themselves and fell to mourning, and used Fasting to help it forward; and to further them to this remorse and grieve for their great and hainous transgressions: they had grieved the Lord by their iniquities, and therefore now they would grieve themselves with contrition for them, and neglect no means to further them in the worke of humiliation; *They* *Jonah* 3.
Proclaime a Fast, they put on Sackcloth from the greatest to the least; they neither eat nor drinke; they cry mightily unto God, and every man turnes from his evill way, and from the wickednesse that is in their hands: And when God saw that they turned from their evill wayes, then God repented of the evill that he said he would doe unto them, and he did it not. And since we of this Nation have seen and felt affliction, and justly may feare danger to be neer us still; let us betake our selves to this mourning; if we refuse to doe it, and shall continue to be hard-hearted; suppose the devouring, bloud-letting Sword should come againe into our Land; suppose the Plague like a loaden sponge should come flying through our Townes and Countreies, sprinkling poyson wheresoever she comes; suppose pale, meager Famine should come, which is the very Engine of destruction, and brings terrour to mortalls, death to all things: Are not we likely to be taken away with any of these, and to have, not our bodies onely, but our soules in danger also, and that, of Gods wrath and everlasting displeasure? Let us therefore seek to have our hearts mollified by this excellent meanes, and for this end, the better to move us; let us consider of the blessings which God hath been pleased plentifully to
 poure

Nehem. 9.

poure downe upon this people, as they did in the day of
 their humiliation, of whom *Nehemiah* makes mention. Let
 us likewise seriously recount how many mercies we have
 enjoyed, and how much they have been abused; how many
 afflictions we have felt, and how little we have been bet-
 terd; how many deliverances we have had, and yet how
 carelesse, nay, how rebellious we have been, notwithstanding
 them all. Let us weigh with our selves, what hurt our
 sins have done unto us; how many good things they have
 turned from us, and how many evils they have pull'd
 upon us; and above all, let us remember what a huge
 weight, and multitude of miseries, they have brought up-
 on our Saviour; namely, debasement, and humiliation, ex-
 change of the greatest glory, for the greatest infamy, sor-
 rows and sufferings, assaults and temptations, the heavy
 burthen of our guiltinesse, and the grievous punishment
 due for our deserts, the rage and violence of most malici-
 ous men, and the wrath and displeasure of the most righte-
 ous God, torments of Body, and terrours of soule, and death
 it selfe, a painefull death, a shamefull death, and a cursed
 death. And because commonly sad spectacles call sorrow
 before it come; let us look back againe upon that severe
 whip of Gods Justice, the late Scourge of these three
 Lands; and imagine you see your Children slaine before
 your Eyes, ones Head off, anothers Arme, a third crying
 unto you, and the little one hanging upon you, and then
 tell me, if it be not high time to weep and mourne with
 them of *Ziagag*, whose soules were grieved, and they wept,
 till they could weep no more, every man for his Sons, and
 for his Daughters; 1 Sam. 30. 4. 6. But especially to lament
 for our sins of all things else most hurtfull to man, un-
 dermining our soules, and drawing destruction after them,
 unsheathing Gods Sword, and violently forcing him to his
 Armory, so put on the Garments of vengeance, as *Isaiah*
 speaketh. And as thus the Cartropes of our sins have bur-
 ried downe Gods Judgements upon us, and have cryed to
 God for vengeance; so now, let our miseries cry unto him
 for

Publick Sorrow.

82

for mercy; and let us implore Gods gracious power, and that with an howling lamentation, to stay his further threatened (and justly merited) punishments, from any more displaying horror throughout our Nation: And for this purpose, let us weep, and sob, and sigh, and cry mightily unto the Lord our God: And the more sorrow, the better for us, for such moisture will dissolve the clouds of our iniquities; and the more showers of griefe fall from our Eyes and Hearts, the clearer and fairer will the wayes of our Hearts be for the feet of the Lord to walke in. Let us then follow the Apostles counsell, *Suffer affliction, sorrow, and weep:* James 4. 9 And if any thing keep us from this mourning, away with it; Let our laughter be turned into mourning, and our joy into heavinesse; for we cannot cast downe our selves so low, but God will raise us up againe. Seeing then sorrow is the onely Antidote and Sovereigne Remedy for all our poysonous Diseases; let there be weeping, and crying in every Towne, in every Street, in every House, in every Chamber. *Cry unto the Lord.*

Obj. But perhaps some will say, Is Godly griefe a Salve for all Sores, a Remedy for all Diseases: Suppose Warre, as lately it did, should againe thunder in this Land? Surely, to weep and lament in the time of Warre, is no signe of Manhood; it rather argues that Men are faint-hearted; want courage and fortitude; so that this wringing and wayling, is altogether unbecoming the person of a Man of Valour: let us therefore trust in God, and be stout, and of a good courage, and never mourne for the matter?

Ans. Doth it argue want of Courage, to lament for sinne? It rather argues want of Faith, not to lament for sinne. What doe you thinke of Jacob, was he a Coward? you cannot say so of him; for the holy Ghost gives him this commendation, *That he had strength and courage not onely to prevayle against men, but with the Angel of the Covenant,* (Gen 32. 28.) And his conflict was, *he Wept, and Prayed.* So that that which we thinke weaknesse, the Scripture calls strength; For by his strength he had power with God,

God, (Hosea 12. 4.) What doe you thinke of David, was he a Coward? there is none, I thinke, will so disgrace that worthy and renowned Captaine of the Lord of Hosts: And yet he himselfe in his *Psalmes*, often makes mention of his Teares, and sayes, *That he watered his couch with his teares: And that his Eyes did gush out with Rivers of teares.* What will ye say to all Gods People, of whom it is said, *That they should mourne as they did for Iohah, in the Valley of Hadadrimmon?* and as one mourneth for his First-borne, the onely Heyre and hope of the Family. Will you condemne all Gods people for a generation of Cowards? nay, this is so farre from bewraying any want of Courage, that we may boldly say, That when men are fullest of such Teares, then are they fullest of Fortitude. What shall we thinke of the Lord Jesus Christ, had he no Heart? was he destitute of Courage? that could not possibly be: And yet, when he was to exercise the fulnesse of his Power, to undertake such a worke, as no creature durst attempt; when he was to offer up himselfe to his Father, as a Sacrifice for the sins of the World; when he was to encounter the Lords wrath, and his justice; the Devill, Death, Hell, and Damnation, and all the Powers of Darkenesse, that same time, *he Wept, and that abundantly:* And I hope none will say, that then our Saviours Strength sayled him, notwithstanding his bitter Tears and Cryes. Surely those that doe not weep when there is cause, they are without Heart, and utterly voyd of true Valour, and subject to maveillons fears, and violent distempers, which arise from a base mind. For what is the reason they are so afraid of Death? but because they have not mourned for their sinnes, and so removed the sting of Death, which if they had done, they would then triumph over Death; and say with Saint Paul, *O Death where is thy sting?* (1 Cor. 15. 55.) their hearts would then stand fast, as the strong mountains, and not be afraid of any evill tidings, *No nor of the Pestilence that walketh in the dark; nor of the Plague that destroyeth in noon-day,* *Psalm. 136. 6.*

worldly helps, the deeper distresses we be in, the least comfort they will afford us ; so in Spirituall helps, the greater extremities we be in, the more comfort will they minister unto us ; when we are helplesse and hopelesse, then Faith works wonders, and never shewes forth it selfe so mightily, and powerfully, as when it workes alone. Wealth, Strength, Friends, and all other outward things, and worldly comforts, (when miseries lye heavy upon us, and we begin to cast an Eye to them, expecting some reliefe and comfort from them) will but deale with us, as the High Priests did with Judas ; when all went well with him, then they hug'd him, and who but Judas, they then made shew of all favour and friendship towards him ; but when in the horror and anguish of his soule, he makes his moane unto them, *Crying out, that he had sinned, betraying Innocent blood* ; they then set him packing with a cutting, and uncomfortable answer, *What is that to us ?* And such cold comfort shall we receive from any Earthly props and supports whercon we rest, and stay our Hearts ; when we have most need of them, they will stand us least in stead : So that we may truly say of them, as Job did of his Friends, *Miserable comforters are ye all*, Job 16. 2. But as for those that live by Faith in Christ Jesus, they are underlayed with better props and supporters then the world can afford ; for when they have none other to deliver them, they can deliver themselves by Prayers, by tears, by sighs, by cryes, and by calling upon Gods name, *out of the lowest Dungeon.*

Mat. 27.
45.

And if no distress, no breaking, no crushing can hinder Gods People from Praying and Crying ? Then first, This may serve to shew us the difference betwixt the wicked, and the godly, in times of outward or inward affliction, when they drinke both of the same Cup, and are plunged into the same miseries. Cast a wicked man into a Dungeon, and lay him full low, where he can meet with no worldly help ; and what course will he take ? You shall see that either he will blaspheme God, and bite his Tongue for madnesse,

Rev. 18.
15.

madnesse, as they that are spoken of in the *Revelations*; or, else he will grow desperate, and make away with himselfe, as *Judas*, *Ashitophel*, and other monsters have done: But let a godly man be layd as fast and low in the same Dungeon, and he will be full of joy, when the other is full of desperate griefe, and sing *Psalms*, and poure forth many Prayers and mighty Cryes in stead of the others imprecation: and blasphemous speeches. Take one example for all, *Peter* and *Judas* had both dealt unfaithfully (though in a farre different degree and manner) with their Lord and Master, and were both brought into great perplexity; but *Peter* goes out, confesseth his fault, weeps bitterly, and gaines exceedingly by it: *Judas* on the other side, sorroweth desperately, and speedily dispatcheth himselfe; whereby doth manifestly appeare the different carriage of the Faithfull, and of Infidels when they are both overburthened with sorrowes and miseries.

Secondly, *Can no distresse, no crushing, nor breaking, hinder Gods People from Praying and Crying?* This is for singular comfort unto the Children and servants of God, that no crosse can befall them to hinder their Prayers, or stop the passage of their cryes from the Eares of the Almighty, but all shall quicken and inflame the spirit of Prayer in them; surely the issue of their trouble must needs be good, when it is watered with Teares, and sanctified with requests; if they can wait till their harvest come, such a seed-time must needs bring them a plentifull and blessed crop of comfort. And therefore, if you have the holy Ghost in your Soules, and Prayer in your Hearts; if you have Teares in your Eyes, and sighs in your Breasts, then blesse God for so good an inside, for its your present help in trouble, its your meat in Famine, your preservative in Plague, your strength in Warre, your help in Affliction, and your comfort at all assayes; therefore in all distresse, fly unto God, end in Prayer, and cry unto the Lord.

And no wonder if these people in the time of Famine, fly unto God, in this their woefull, wretched, and miserable estate,

estate, when all outward and worldly comforts fayle them, and lay their burthen upon him, because they knew that he was able to feed and help them (though the cisternes of the world were growne dry) being the Lord; and as willing, as able, being their God. For the majesty of God is so glorious, that it would make them fly from him, and his essence is so incomprehensible, that it is a light that none can have access unto, and an huge Sea, that will drowne such as will adventure to wade into it; but the Knowledge of Gods sufficiency and power to help, and of his mercy and free favour, whereby he is ready and willing to help, thats it that encourageth them to come before the Lord, and call upon his Name with strong cryes, and earnest requests, with sighs, and sobs, and groanes, and cry unto the Lord.

Whence the point is this, *That the knowledge of Gods power and mercy, is the only cause that brings Christians into Gods presence, and makes them call upon him in trouble.* When they are plunged in misery, in distresse, then God shall be sure of their custome and company, like these people here, who when all their hopes were perished, then they run to God, and cast all upon him, whom they knew was able to bring Water out of the Flint, as well as out of the River; and Bread out of the Clouds, as well as out of the Barne. *Canaan* they knew could not maintain them without Gods blessing; and with it, a barren Wildernesse could; and therefore to him they fly, and cry, *They cry unto the Lord.*

For this, look onely upon *Psalme* the ninth, and tenth Verse, where the Prophet sheweth how they come to seek unto God: *They that know thy name will trust in thee, for thou never faylest them that seek thee.* How come they to seek God? They first trust in God, by the Knowledge of Gods Name; which name is, *the Lord, strong, gracious, and mercifull*, and till men come to know this Name, they can never come to trust in God, nor to seek God, but by the right understanding and applying of the Name of God.

M 2

Nothing

Nothing in distresse can hinder them from crying unto the Lord, because they *know* that there is no evil; but in his name they may have an Antidote against it; no sore, but there they shall have a salve to cure it; no disease, but there they shall have a remedy to help it; no wound, but there they shall have a Playster to heale it; no sickness, but there they shall have a cordiall to comfort it, and Physicke to recover it; no doubt, but there they shall find a resolution for it, nor no good thing, but there they may get a certainty of obtaining it. And therefore to hearten you in all assayes, in all distresses, miseries, and calamities whatsoever, to *fly to this Name*, which will be like an Oyntment poured forth to fill and delight the hearts of the Faithfull with the odour of it. And though I cannot give you a definition of the Lord your God, yet take that description of the name of God, metably, and comfortably set downe to my hand in *Exodus*, wher you may heare the Lord himselfe Proclayming his Name in these ten several properties, *The Lord, the Lord, strong, mercifull, and gracious, slow to anger, and abundant in goodnesse and truth, reserving mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sins, and not making the wicked innocent, visiting the iniquity of the Fathers upon the Children, and upon the Childrens Children, unto the third and fourth Generation.* Then what misery, what trouble, what distresse, what affliction, what calamity can hinder us from comming to the Lord upon the Feet of Faith and Prayer, to cry unto the Lord.

Exod. 34.
6. 7.

1. Are you layd in the low Dungeon of misery, as *Jehu* was, in the Dungeon of Hell, in the bottome of the Sea, in the belly of the Whale? Are your Enemies mighty, your sufferings many, and your oppressions and pressures heavy? then cry unto the Lord, for he is the Lord, strong, all power is in him, and from him, and for him; he is the mighty God, and he doth not onely use his might for our Salvation, but for our Enemies destruction. If then your troubles be great, and your Enemies mighty? be not dismayed, your God is greater and mightier to help you out of them, then they

are to hold you still in them ; and he rides upon the Heavens, full of Majesty, and full of ability to deliver you, and to set you free from the strongest bonds of affliction. Come but once to know Gods all-sufficient Power, then no affliction or tryall shall make you faint ; The least affliction, if God support us not in it, will be too strong for us ; but the greatest, nay, the rushing in of all at once upon us, if this strong God be on our side, shall not be able to hurt us, or daunt us ; and therefore, when our Hands cannot help us, nor our Tongues prevaile with unreasonable men, let us fly unto this strong Tower, the Lord our God, *And cry unto the Lord.*

2 And now least any poor afflicted soule, hearing of Gods Power, should say, *I know that God is strong and powerfull, but what is that to me ? it may be, he may use his power to my overthrow.* Nay, saith the Lord, *God is mercifull, as well as powerfull;* and therefore why should any be discouraged by misery, since misery is the very object of mercy, and the Eye of Divine pittie is ever fixed upon it ? For the God whom we serve hath no other riches then the riches of his mercy. And this was the argument that David so often used, *Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am weak.* *Psal. 6. 2.*
O Lord heale me, for my bones are vexed ; my soule is also *Psal. 3. 4.*
fore troubled ; but Lord how long wilt thou delay ? Returne,
O Lord, deliver my soule, save me for thy mercies sake.
 And in another Psalm, *Incline thine Eare, O Lord, and* *Psal. 86. 1.*
heare me, for I am poor and needy. And if we come but crying unto him, our very misery will be sufficient to work upon him for mercy ; so that he will be ready to entertaine us, like the Father of the Prodigall, with an *Undeplangis* ? why weepest thou my Sonne ? *I will clothe thee* *Luk. 15. 20*
with the best Rayment, and put my Gold Ring upon thy finger,
and thy Fare shall be the daintiest morsell : nay, he will like that Father of the Prodigall, stand ready to receive us with his armes outstretched to embrace us ; with his hands open, to invite us with gifts ; with his head inclined to afford us the kisse of peace, and shew forth his love unto us upon every occasion,

Hos. 14. 4. *casten*, as the Prophet *Hosea* testifieth, saying, *In thee the Fatherlesse shall find mercy.* Let us then lift up our soules, and cry continually in all straits, and troubles to this God of mercy, for the Lord our God is good, and gracious, and mercifull, and of great *kindnesse* unto all them that call upon him, *Then cry unto the Lord.*

3. But least that any poor soule should be disheartened, as unworthy to cry for mercy, by reason of his owne corruptions, and spots, and staines, and leprosie of sin; The next, to hearten and encourage him is, *That the Lord, as he is strong and mercifull, so he is gracious, that is, loving, and shewing mercy without any merit.* Art thou not worthy of mercy? Hast thou not deserved the least favour at Gods hand? what of that? God tells thee for thy comfort, *that he is gracious.* The Lord our God is so gracious, as that he will not tarry till we deserve favour, nor till we be worthy of mercy; but even while we are unworthy, will freely shew forth his goodnesse and mercy towards us.

Acts 9. 1. How worthy was *Saul*, when he was even breathing out threatening and slaughter against the Disciples of the Lord?

Rom. 4. 5. And therefore it is said of *Abraham*, *That he beleeveth in him that justifieth the ungodly*; noting thereby, that sinne cannot hinder Gods favour from offenders, but that through Faith they shall be justified, and made as innocent in Gods account, as if they had never offended at all: Then let us not, when we are in distresse, be discouraged, or dismayed, by reason of the foulness of our sinnes; but let us go to the Lord, and come but penitently, and he will shew himselfe gracious, notwithstanding them all; *Then cry unto the Lord.*

4. But still the wounded soule perhaps may say, *Alas, I have provoked God to wrath, I have incensed him, and justly drawne his heavy hand upon me by my sins*; and therefore, though the Lord be gracious, with what comfort or hope can such a sinfull wretch as I go to cry to that God I have so heinously offended? Hast thou provoked and offended thy God? yet let not that dismay nor hinder thee, but goe, cry

unto the Lord, for he tells thee himselfe, *That he is slow to anger*, that is, long ere he be provoked. Witnesse the cries of *Sodome*, which pierced the Eares of the Almighty ; yet so loath was God to showre downe *Fire and Brimstone* ; as that he expostulates the matter, as if he had bin jealous of his owne Eares, and answers with an *Ego vadam, & videbo* ; *I will goe downe and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry that is come unto me*. And thus, as he is hard to be provoked, making as though he saw not our sins, because he would have us to amend ; so, when he is provoked, he is as easie to be appeased. And this is seen in *Mary Magdalene* (a notorious sinner) in the City of *Ierusalem*, who was grown so shamelesse, as that the whole City suffered in regard of the bad report that went of her ; yet she no sooner stands at his Feet behind him weeping ; but Christ presently tells *Simon*, *that many sins are forgiven her*. Luk. 7. 38. For we can no sooner fall out with our sins, but God falls in with us. An Earthly Father will not take every advantage against his Child ; and when the Child is grieved that he hath committed a great fault, good Parents are easily satisfied. The Lord our God pitieth us, as a Father his Children ; and whensoever we kindle his wrath against us, one Teare of true Repentance, will quench all the Flame thereof. And to this, *David* giveth sufficient testimony, saying, *The Lord is slow to anger, and of great kindnesse, he will not alwayes chide, nor keep his anger for ever*. Psal. 103. 8. 9. And this he himselfe found by good experience, for when after many mercies received he had grievously provoked the Lord in that matter of *Uriah*, and did not repent, but still lay in his sin ; inso much, as God was angry with him : *David* no sooner begins to make confession of his sin, but God forthwith tells him by the Prophet, *That he had put away his sin* : so that the Lord was more ready to offer him pardon, when he was to aske it. And therefore, since the Lord is slow to anger, and easie to be intreated ; let not our sins (though never so many) hinder us from Crying to the Lord,

5. But still some poor soule perhaps may say, *This true indeed, I know there is no fault on Gods part, he is slow to anger, and easie to be intreated ; But what am I the better, when I cannot fit my selfe to seek for mercy as I ought to doe? Alas, I am weake, and full of infirmities, I come farre short every way, I cannot Pray as I ought, my Prayers are few, and cold, and weake ; I cannot keep Gods Word, my memory is fraile and slippery, &c.* What of all this ? let no weaknesse nor infirmities dismay thee, for the Lord himselfe tells thee in the next place, *that he is abundant in goodnesse, or abundant in kindnesse ;* and it is the property of *kindnesse* to take small things in good worth, and to passe by infirmities and weaknesse, and to be easie to be intreated ; *he will not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax ;* if we can but once come to be humble in heart, though we cannot attaine to that measure of sanctification, as others have ; nor poure out our Soules in Prayer as we should : yet God will take all in good part ; he that will reward a Cup of cold Water, he will reward a cold Prayer ; for God looks not for perfection from poor weak creatures, that are full of imperfection ; And therefore since he is abundant in kindnesse, let not our infirmities and weaknesse hinder us from crying unto the Lord.

6. But the poor afflicted soule may perhaps still say, *Though the Lord be abundant in goodnesse and kindnesse ; yet how shall I know that this goodnesse and kindnesse of God shall be performed unto me ; for I have Prayed, and Cryed, and waited long, and yet am never the nerer : so that though he be good, and yet not good to me ; kind, and yet not kind to me, what am I the better ?* Hast thou Prayed ; and Cryed, and wayted, and hath not God seemed to regard, nor answered thy requests, in relieving thy wants, easing thy torments, removing thy pressures ? &c. yet Cry still, and in the Lords due time thou shalt be sure of reliefe ; for he never promiseth, but he performeth, if we persevere without fainting ; And so he himselfe tells thee in the next place, *that he is abundant in truth ;* As he never threatens any

any thing, but he executes it; so he never promisseth any thing, but he performes it. You may beleeeve him without an Oath; *But I have sworne by my holinesse, saith God, that I will not forsake David; And never any yet could charge him with breach of promise; hath he promised, and shall he not performe?* Then cheare up your hearts, and pluck up your spirits, your God hath promised, *that those that feare him, shall want nothing that is good.* Again, he hath promised, *That if we call upon him in the day of trouble, he will not onely heare, but deliver.* And who ever did so, and found not according to his expectation? Then why should not we rest upon his promise? hath the Mouth of the Lord spoken it, and shall he not doe it? for take away his Truth, and take away his God head. What then? though in these hard times, our money is gone, our goods gone, our lands and possessions gone, our liberty gone, our Friends gone, and all our outward stayes be gone: But is Gods truth gone? Hath he not promised to provide for us when we are poor, as well as when we are rich; when we are in sickness, as well as when we are in health? Hath not he said, *I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee?* Did not he provide for us in our Infancy? and shall we not trust him in our Age? Let every man in all trouble and distresse, confidently, and humbly say, *The Lord is my helper, I will not feare what Man can doe unto me.* We have his promise to heare, and help, and not to leave and forsake; but to deliver, when we call upon him: And since his promise is passed, he will performe it; *for he is abundant in truth.* And therefore, *let us cry unto the Lord.*

7. But the poor sin-burthened soule, may perhaps still say, *What though the Lord be abundant in truth, and never promisseth, but doth performe? Whats all this to me, whose soule must needs be loathsome unto him, being all spotted with sin, wallowing in the puddle of iniquity, and that with consent, and delight to?* For this, goe look upon *Mary Magdalen*, and others, whose soules thou shalt find as filthy and loathsome as thine; but when once they fell to bache, and wash them

Psal. 34.
10.Psal. 50.
15.

Hab. 13.5.

Hab. 13.6.

Luke 7.

Psalm in the River of Repentance, and to swell and rise them in a *Jordan* of sorrow; then see how *God* dealt with them, and be not dismayed, though thy sins be of the deepest tincture, for there is mercy in store for thee: And so he himselfe tells thee in the next place, *That he is a God reserving mercy for thousands*; giving us to understand thereby, that he hath Floods of mercy for all that stand in need of it. Never went any to God for mercy, but he found mercy, if he sought in Faith, as God bids him; for he hath mercy in store for thousands. With Earthly Kings, he that comes not first, speeds worst; but it is not so with the King of Heaven, he hath sufficient for those that come to him last, as well as for those that come to him first; his Fountain is never dry, the well-spring of his mercy continually flowes, he can comfort thousands, as well as one person, and yet his store not be lessened one whit. Surely there are many thousands in Heaven, that were once as bad as we are; and yet now they are in a Paradise of rest; they are now gone from misery, to mercy; from a wretched life, to a far better being, and quite out of the reach of all sin, and sorrow. Then who would not come to such a Physician as hath wrought so perfect a cure upon so many, and that of free cost, and never suffered any one to miscarry that was willing to be his Patient? Men did lye at the Poole of *Bethesda* many Yeares, expecting to be healed; we need not lye so long at the gates of Heaven for the ouing of our soules; but we are sure to be perfectly helped, when we are truly humbled, and fitted for help. And therefore, let not our sins discourage us, seeing there is mercy in store, our God being a *God reserving mercy for thousands*, nor hinder us from comming to that God of mercy, whose mercy knows no limits, *And cry unto the Lord.*

3. But still the poor afflicted soule over-laden with sin, perhaps may say, *I know that God is a God of mercy, and hath mercy in store for thousands; But alas, my sins sink me, my miseries doe not so much trouble me, as my sins, which are many and grievous, and sins of the largest magnitude, and of long continuance: With what face then, or hopes, dare I*

come, and cry unto the Lord? For that, courage Christian; thou whose soule is thus wounded with sin; for hadst thou all the sins and sores that might be, thou needest not be disheartned from comming unto the Lord. seeing he himselfe tells thee in the next place, *that he is a God forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin*; and if he should not shew himselfe to be such a God towards the militant Church, he should lose both his name, and his people at once; but he pardons all these kinds of sin, he pardons iniquity, that is, originall sin, and the perversnesse of our nature, that cleaves so fast unto us; he pardons transgression, that is, sins of rebellion and presumption; and he pardons sin, that is, sins of custome, and such as are grown to an habit; and if any one be weary of this burthen, God will give him a speedy dispatch, *the heavy laden, if they come unto him, he will ease them*. And this a man may boldly claime at Gods hand, and intreat him to be God, for that he could not be, unlesse he should performe this for us: And therefore, though nothing trouble thee so much as thy sins, and though they be never so many, great, and grievous, and of long continuance; nay, though thou wert more leprousthen *Gehazi*, more uncleanethen *Magdalene*, and more blind in soule then ever *Bartimeus* was in body; yet courage sinner, and remember that thy God, is a God forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, and therefore down on thy Knees, and fall to thy Prayers, *And cry unto the Lord*.

9. But for all this that hath been said of Gods goodnesse towards his chosen; the poor afflicted soule may perhaps object (as unbelieve is full of objections) and say, *Alas, we see how wicked men prosper, hold up their heads, and flourish in the world; they have their Barnes full, and Cubbords full, and Chests full, and all things goe with them according to their hearts desire: whereas Gods Children sinke, and are trampled under foot, the Righteous are wronged, and the Church over-run by the ungodly of the World?* Nay, saith God, in the next place, let not that trouble nor dishearten thee, *For I am a God that holds not the wicked innocent*; let them take their swing, and make

make havock for a time, God may spare them long, yet will
Nahum 1. visit them at the last; *For God is jealous, and the Lord re-*
 2. 3. *vengeeth, even the Lord of anger; the Lord will take vengeance*
on his adversaries, and he reserveth wrath for his enemies: The
Lord is slow to anger, but he is great in power, and will not
Hab. 1. 12. *surely cleave the wicked. And as Habakkuk saith, He hath*
ordained them for judgement, and established them for correcti-
on. Whereas those that are his, he corrects but for a time; but
 his anger never awagerth towards the reprobate, though for
 a long time he deferre. And therefore grudge not to see the
 wicked flourish like a green Bay-tree, for a time; passe but
 by a little and upon your return, his place will not be found,
 for God holds not the wicked innocent. But for you, though
 you be afflicted here, you shall be comforted hereafter; for,
 through many afflictions we must enter into the Kingdome of Hea-
 ven: This is the Kings high-way to happinesse and there is
 not a Saint in Heaven, but hath led this way, and beaten this
 path before us; For Stones cannot be squared for Pallace-
 worke, without the stroke of the Hammar; and we must be
 content to endure the strokes of Gods Hammar of afflictions,
 that we may be polished, and squared, and made live'y Stones
 fit to be layd in the Heavenly Jerusalem. What matters it
 then, to see Dives here flant it in Purple, and fare deliciously
 every day when at last, he must be tormented in flames; while
 hunger-starved Lazarus, though afflicted here, yet his comfort
 is hereafter, and is transported from the Porch of a Tyrant, to
 the Bosome of Abraham. Besides, though God useth many
 wayes to bring us home unto him, yet none more then afflic-
 tion. It was Hunger that drove the Prodigall home to his Father;
 And surely nothing so opens the Eyes of the soule, as misery
 and trouble. O how correction opens those Eyes; which pro-
 sperity kept shut! O how often doth the paineing of the Bo-
 dy, work the saving of the Soule! O how often doe misfor-
 tunes, like the Rungs in Jacobs Ladder, serve to mount out
 soules up to Heaven! Let God then wound us, so he will but
 heale us; let him strik our Bodies with sicknesse, with sores
 with restraint, so he will but with these wounds heale our
 Soules.

Soules: Let come what will come, so it but chafe us to God, drive us home to his House, end in Prayer, and make us cry unto the Lord.

10. But Will the afflicted soule goeth on, and sayeth, *Though God tell us that he holds not the wicked innocent, and will not surely cleave them, but ordains them for judgement, and reserves them for correction; yet we dayly see, that they doe not onely flourish here in this world, but goe to their graves in peace, and are not (to any outward appearance) in trouble like other men.* Well, saith God, in the tenth, or last place, Say they doe, yet will I meet with them in their Children, and punish their sins in their posterity, *Visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children, and upon their Childrens Children, unto the third and fourth Generation;* they shall be sure to tast of the bitter Cup of Gods wrath here, as their Fathers doe in Hell. Thus, if this name of God, in these ten severall properties, were but rightly understood and applyed, were it but as oymment poured out and spread upon our hearts, there is nothing in distresse, nothing in trouble, nothing in misery could hinder us from crying to the Lord, considering he is strong mercifull, gracious, abundant in goodnesse and truth, and forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin, &c. But without any further enlargement, upon these properties, in their severall particulars, I will onely clasp them altogether, and make Application, and so hasten you again to the House of Mourning, to cry unto the Lord.

Is the Lord thus strong, and mercifull, and gracious? &c. then why should a Christian trouble himselfe at any thing that befalls him here? Hath he crafty enemies? let him goe cry to the Lord for direction, his wisdom is infinitely beyond their policy. Hath he strong enemies? let him goe cry to the Lord, he is mightier and stronger then they all. In a word, hath he any outward affliction, or inward corruption that doth annoy or trouble him? let him goe cry to the Lord, and have recourse to his God, and there he shall find remedy for all; nay, whatsoever mans ease be, if he but seek the Lord, he shall have help.

Go, sayes that Princely Prophet, *God is neer to all that call upon him,* Psal. 145.
18. 19.

him, yea, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of them that feare him; he also will heare their cry, and will save them. And though their hearts be so oppressed, that they can utter no words, thats no matter. God will have respect to their very desires; and surely their teares speak highest, and their sighs cry loudest in the Ears of God. Let us then groane for a broken heart, and sigh, and sob, and weep, and cry, *Cry unto the Lord.*

Thus having done with this peoples behaviour in the time of Famine; and likewise with the Remedy they used, they cast their burthen upon the Lord: as also with the Motives inducing them thereunto, because he is able, being the Lord, and willing because their God. Let us now close up all in our mourning garments, and robing our soules with the inward sackcloth of sorrow, not onely Pray, but Weep; nor Weep alone, but Cry, *Cry unto the Lord.* From whence the Point is this.

They who would not have God to shut his eares against their Prayers, must be sure that they not onely Pray, but Cry; and that their Petitions proceed from a broken heart, and an humble spirit. For till the heart be even pulled in pieces by godly sorrow, and rent in sander with godly griefe, sin and lust will not out, and then there can be no acceptance looked for from God; either of us, or of our services. The sacrifice of God (saith David) is a sorrowfull spirit, a broken, and a contrite heart. O God thou wilt not despise. And therefore did Christ groane in his Spirit, when he Prayed for that poorman in the Gospel. So did Hannah, sigh and weep sore, and poured out her soule before God. And there is good reason to move us to labour thus to be inwardly touched; for till we have a sense and feeling of our wants, we may well speak, but we can never Pray; till the heart be pained with sin, its impossible it should be fervent for the pardon of it. He that hath no feeling of poverty, cannot earnestly intreat for a supply of his necessities. He that hath no feeling of his sicknesse, can never be an instant suiter for the means of health. So he that hath no feeling of his spirituall poverty, can never covetously hunt after those true treasures, which onely enrich his soule to all eternality.

And

Psal. 51.
17.

Mat. 7.35

1 Sam. 1.
15.

And he that hath no sense of his sin-ſick ſoule, can never ſeek to that true Phyſician, who onely can apply Phyſicke to his bleeding heart, and ſin-ſick burthened ſoule.

This ſerves for the reproofe of thoſe, that come with drowſie verball Prayers, thoſe that come with words of courſe to intreat God to pardon their ſins, and ſtrengthen their Faith; but never poure out their ſoules before God, but onely ſpend a little breath, and they ſpeed accordingly; for their cold Prayers, bring but cold ſucceſſe: And this is true, not onely of the wicked, but even of the godly. *David roared and cryed,* *Pſal. 32.* but was never the better, *till he confeſſed his ſin, and was inwardly grieved for the ſame;* and then, both ſin and puniſhment were removed at once. Therefore let us ſtrive with the Lord in our Prayers, and Supplications, labouring for this fighting and crying, this inward ſorrow which is ſo needfull; that doing as this people did in the time of Famine, we may ſpeed, as they did, in this time of our calamity. *For thus ſaith he that is high and excellent, he that inhabiteth eternity, whoſe name is, the Holy one; I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to give life to them that are of a contrite heart.* *Iſa. 57. 15.* And the longer we wayt and cry, the greater meaſure of comfort we ſhall have, and the longer it ſhall tarry with us: And therefore, ſince ſervency in Prayer is ſo requiſite, let us not onely Pray, but Cry, *Cry unto the Lord.*

And for our comforts, we ſhall find God as ready to heare, as we are to cry; and if we ſend up our Petitions unto him, with ſighs and groans, he will ſend down ſpeedy, and comfortable help unto us, and we ſhall be ſure of good ſucceſſe, even above that we can aſk or think: As it is in the *Lamentations,* *Lam. 3. 42.* *Thou haſt heard my Voyce, thou drewſt near in the day that I called upon thee.* Whether we deſire the ſuppreſſion of our enemies, or ſubduing of our own corruptions, or whatſoever elſe, we ſhall be ſure to ſpeed well; God will draw near unto us by his mercifull preſence, and with gracious deliverance; if we draw near unto him in our miſeries and afflictions. So ſaith our Saviour, *Whoſoever asketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh,* *Mat. 7. 8.*

seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened. Let us then knock at Gods presence Chamber-doores, and though we be never so mean, never so contemptible, we shall have no repulse; For he will fulfil the desires of those that feare him, he will also heare their cry: their sins, though never so many in number, or grosse in nature, cannot hinder Gods favour: Witnesse the Israelites, who lived many

2 Chron.
13.

years without the true God; yet whosoever returned in his misery, and sought God, he was found of him. Another ex-

Luke 22.
42. 43.

ample of Gods goodnesse in this regard, we have in Jonah, who though, for his Rebellion, he was cast into the Sea; yet God heard him out of the belly of the fish, and set him upon the dry land again. A third shall be that notorious Theefe, who had spent all his life in the Devils service; yet no sooner cries,

2 Chron.
33.

Lord remember me; but Christ, (not once calling him in the teeth with his sins) gives him this good, and quick, and comfortable dispatch. To day shalt thou be with me in Paradise. The last for this, shall be Manasses, who had been a most wretched and miserable sinner; yet, when he cried to the Lord in his distresse, he heard him, set him free, and restored him to his Kingdome. Here then is comfort for every distressed soule, let us but call upon the name of our God, and then help and comfort is at hand; for God is neer to all that call upon him in truth, though it be not with such strength of Faith as we should; yet if we seek him, he will be found of us, and he limits us not to time, conditions, or things; but we may look for help at all times, in all straits, and in all things; and when we have most need, then we shall be sure of the best help: But now, if we would be certain of this comfort, we must observe these three Rules.

Job 11. 14.

First, We must put all wickednesse out of our hearts, and out of our hands; we must humble our selves, and turn from our wicked wayes; we must remove our sins, and then God will

James 4. 8

remove our crosses. So Saint James exhorts, Purge your hands ye sinners, and purifie your hearts ye double minded: And this is it we must doe, if we will have God to draw neer unto us: for God will not dwell in an heart defiled with sin, he will

cora

turn both eyes and ears from us, if we continue in our evill wayes; because that when our Tongues cry for mercy, then our Sins cry for vengeance: and though we cannot come to him without iniquity, yet we may come to him without the love and liking of iniquity, we may come with shame and sorrow for our iniquity, and then our sins neither hinder our Prayers, nor stop, or keep back Gods favour from us.

Secondly, We must seek God according to all his means, as we find in the *Canticles*, *Who when the Church had lost Christ*, Cant. 3. that is, the feeling of his love, and the sense of that Communion which formerly she had with him; she then useth all private and publick means, and at length commeth to conference with Gods servants (which few will doe, till they be driven to it of necessity) and then having wayted a while, *she finds him whom her soule loveth*. The same must be our practice; if one medicine will not serve the turn, use another; Pray, Fast, Meditate, Confer, and then at last the Lord will be found in mercy; but as we are slack in using any of the means, so shall we sayle in our comfortable expectation of favour from God.

Thirdly, We must use the means diligently, and in good earnest; for if we have a base account of Gods mercies, its just that we should goe without them. *The Prayer of the righteous availeth much*; but upon this condition, *if it be fervent*. James. 5. *God delivereth the poor when he cryeth*; but if they would have hearing, there must be crying. God poures forth Floods of grace, but upon whom? The Prophet tells us, *Only on the thirsty ground. God filleth the hungry with good things*; but they must be hungry; they must be such as feel themselves pincht and starved with spirituall famine. Christ *was sent to preach the acceptable yeare*, but not to the mighty and States of the world. To whom then? even to *Prisoners, and Captives*, that is, to such as could grieve and mourn for their Captivity. Hence is it, that a number reade, and heare, and pray, and yet prevaile not; because they doe it so drowsily, and carelessly, the Lord defers to help them, because they are not fit for help; because they doe not strive and wastle in their Prayers. Let us therefore use all the means with constancy and carefulness,

ness, and then we shall obtain our hearts desire, even above that we can ask or think; for if we would not have God to shut his ears to our Prayers, we must not onely Pray, but Cry. Let us then (having first washed our hearts and hands from unrepented sins) goe unto the Lord, and cry unto him to give us the assurance of eternall life, and the joy of the holy Ghost, and then come life or death, it matters not much; for though our name, and liberty, and riches, and all, be taken away from us, yet we shall be settled in the assurance of an happy issue out of all our straits and difficulties, for the Lord our God will maintain our cause against all those that strive with us, and will stand on our part, and fight against those that fight against us; according to that of the Prophet *Isaiah*. *He watcheth over them night and day and waters them every moment; and he will contend with them, that contend against his people; and so either free them from their oppressions and miseries; or else, (which is best of all) take them to himselfe; where they shall be sure to have joy without sadness, pleasure without paine, wealth without want, health without sickness, life without death, and a Kingdom without a change.* The consideration whereof, me thinks, should strike terror into the hearts of those that are injurious unto the servants of God: they may be bold where the hedge is low; every Dwarf will adventure to leape over there; but let them know, that God is a wall of fire about those that are his, and he will maintain the right of his children; and therefore it must needs at last goe ill with such, as lift up themselves against them. *O Lord thou hast maintained the cause of my soule; there is our stay: Let us be sure we have a good cause, and lay it before Gods judgement seat; and then, though we be overborne, God will not be overborne, but he will stand on our side even he that loves goodness, and hates wickedness, and will be avenged on those that bend themselves and their endeavours to doe mischief unto his people.* Again, all our wrongs are known unto God; *O Lord thou hast seen my wrong; nothing is done, spoken or imagined against any of Gods Children, but God takes knowledge of it; there is not one practice, slander, or devise of cruell*

wolves

wolves against the sheep of Christ; but God sees it, and markes it, and it belongs unto him to judge the cause of his servants, *and to reward every one according to their works;* Rael. 20.
12. He must and will give them full pay, and for that end keeps all upon just and due record; so that as the works of the righteous shall stand for them, so shall the works of the wicked be written in great Capitall Letters against them, that all the world may take notice of them at the last day. How may we then cheare up our hearts in all distresse? for howsoever our Adversaries be busie and watchfull to plot and procure our hurt; yet they cannot be so vigilant for our hurt, as God is watchfull for our good; and therefore we may be sure to have an happy issue out of all our troubles, if so be we can but make our mean to God, and wait patiently for his mercy. And though God knows our griefes and oppressions before hand, and purposeth to destroy our enemies; yet would he have us to prefer our Bill of complaint, and goe on in our suite against them, *and still cry unto the Lord.* Neither is this to be restrained onely to corporall adversaries, but it holds much more strongly for spirituall enemies: Say a man be surcharged with sin and Sathan, who play the Tyrants over him; his soule being even scorched with the flames of Hell; let him but bemoane his Case before the Lord, and it will be a marvellous case unto him: Therefore in all such extremities likewise, let God be our refuge and Tower-Royall, let us cast all our cares and sorrows upon him, who is both able and willing to beare them, and in due season will both free us from them, and in the end make us gainers by them, if we cry *unto the Lord.*

To come to the close. In the first of the *Chronicles*, Jabez the son of Ashur, is said to be more honourable then all his brethren; the reason is, because his Mother bare him in sorrow, and his name is a name of sorrow; and it is there said, That Jabez, called upon the God of Israel to be delivered from evil, and the Lord (saith the Text) heard him, and granted the thing that he asked. And is the Lord so ready to hear, and willing to grant? how then comes it to passe, that we who have been so

*1 Chron.
4. 9. 10,*

severely scourged with the whip of Gods indignation, after all these years of sufferings, of punishments, and of divisions amongst us, the hand of the Lord should be stretched out still? for though, thanks be to God, we are no way disquieted with any sound of war, nor alarmes to Battell in our Nation; yet, the reformation of Religion, which was one main thing intended at the beginning of our unhappy differences, and as hopefully expected, and prayed, and sought for, hath been hitherto so eclipsed, as that whereas before there were different opinions amongst us, (as indeed there was never Church without the wrinkles of division) so now men are grown to such variety of conceits about Gods service, as that we have almost as many religions as men; insomuch, that we who should have all one God to our Father, all one Church to our Mother all one Christ Jesus to our elder Brother, are so far from unity, amity; and unanimity amongst our selves, in respect of these weefull divisions, as that opinions must either be suffered to take wall of Scripture, and substance give way to circumstance, which God forbid; or else, as branches, we cannot grow together; nor, as members, agree together; nor, as brethren, love and live together; nor, as Christs Sheep, Feed and Fold together. And what is the reason that after all this while we are not yet helped, but Religion, in stead of being reformed, must still receive new and more wounds then before? Surely the cause is this, Because we have not so mourned as we ought in these our common calamities, for the sins of the times, and for the abominations of the Land; because we have not sighed and groaned heartily for the sins that cleave to our soules; otherwise God would have been as ready to heare, as we to cry; for good suiters are alwayes good speeders: but It seems we have not cryed to the Lord with our hearts; though perhaps we have howled upon our Beds, as the Lord himselfe complains in

Hos. 7. 14.

Hosea. And though these rents in our Church be sufficient of themselves to open the flood-gates of sorrow, and clothe all our dejected soules with the garments of heaviness, and liveries of mourning; yet there are other miseries and troubles, (though not fit to stand in competition with these) that lye so

sadly

sadly upon us, as might well fill our eyes with tears, our breasts with sighs. To name them were superfluous; what eare hears not of troubles, and losses, and crosses on Land, and on Sea, at home, and abroad? and where is any mourning for the afflictions of Joseph? where are our tears that should cry aloud, and pierce the ears of the Almighty? surely we have not so mourned as we ought to have done. It is a Prodigy to see Fountains dried up in Winter; but far more prodigious must it needs be, to see our eyes, hearts, breasts, and all, dry, in these so many winters of our common miseries, and these long continued stormes of our afflictions. I know there is few or none of us, but will sigh at the losse of his goods by enemies, at the parting with his estate, at the Imprisoning of his Person, at the banishing of himselfe and friends from their native homes, there is none of these but seems to take away the very life of our soules from us; and yet few of us sigh for our own, or other mens sins, the cause of all our woe. But surely all causes, rather then effects, are to be lamented; sin is the cause, losse, but the effect: And though tis true, that reason doth informe, and affection doth inforce a kind of lamentation, weeping, and mourning for the losse of goods, liberty, or friends, &c. yet grace doth commend, and God doth command another sighing, sobbing, crying, both for our own, and nationall sins; for nature doth teach us to weep for naturall causes; but grace for (spirituall): and if the least of our besome sins be fire in the hand, and a serpent in the heart; how much more then are common sins to be lamented, being the unfruitfull thornes that choke the good seed of vertue and grace? And yet it is to be feared, if inquiry were made, that many would be found in this great and still continued misery, whose mouthes, in stead of prayers and cries, belch and breath out nothing but the unfavoury speeches of the soule, corrupting not the company onely, but the very Ayre in which they breathe; whose eyes, in stead of tears, are the open windows to let in whole loads of sin into their minds; whose ears, in stead of receiving and conveying the good Word of God to their soules, are the doores of their own destruction; whose breasts, in stead

of

of sighs, are the very store-house of corruption; nay, were inquisition made, it is to be feared, that many of us would be found in these our publick maladies (though the times have long called to mourning) scarce to have layd aside our publick sins, not parting with our ordinary impieties in these extraordinary judgements. Good *Uriah* refused to take his home

2 Sam. 11.

II.

Exod. 3.8

I pray God none of us have presumed to take unhoneest courses, since our miseries have bin so great, our plagues so mighty, Gods judgements so weighty, and our danger so eminent. Let then all of us shew our selves by an holy mourning, that we are so far from participating in such mens sins, and in the wickednesse of the world, as that in consideration hereof we may be found not onely sighing, but weeping, and bemoaning the increase of iniquity, and deploring the sins of our Nation. And no doubt but many might be found amongst us, who sometimes send out a naturall sigh or sob, in regard of some outward thing; as in regard of shame, and punishment, in regard of wants and distresses, or in regard of the hand of God upon them by sickness, paine, sores, or the like; as *Pharaoh* did, when the hand of God was on him, then he cryed, *I have sinned, and take away this plague*; but he never cryed, take away the hardnesse of mine heart, and the cursednesse of my nature. Nay more, perhaps some may be found who sometimes sigh and groane for some actuall sin, when they feel it pressing, and lying heavy upon their Consciences; yet these men but groane as the bruite beast doth, that is pressed with some heavy burthen; but they fetch not their sighs from under that corruption that cleaves to their Hearts; so they groane not with their Hearts soundly, when they sigh for their Sins. But if we would have true comfort in sighing and groaning for Sin, we must down to the root of all Sins in our selves, and fetch our sighs from under that corruption that cleaves inwardly to our soules, and thats the sighing of a Child of God; and such loud-tongued scalding Sighs, and salt brinish tears, flowing from the Heart-breaking of a Sin-burthened soule, will be both pleasing to God, and yeild comfort

comfort to us. Let us then sigh and groane heartily for those Sins which are so deeply ingrafted in us; let us weep for our selves, let us weep for others; let every remembrance of Sin, both our own and others, make fresh bleeding wounds in our Hearts: Let sorrow clothe us, let mourning cloud us, let weeping be in every corner; let nothing be heard in our Streets but the Voyce of wayling, and while our miseries are smarting, and our calamities lasting, let nothing remaine to the godly but sorrow and weeping, that so we may escape unhurt, in the devastation of the wicked; for the Saints are alwayes priviledged men, their sorrow is their safety, their lamentation the cause of their preservation: So in *Ezekiel*, *Ezek. 9.* mourners shall be marked, *Set a Marke, saith God, upon the Fore-heads of them that Mourn and Cry for all the abominations of the Land, and by this Marke shall be preserved.* 4 &c. Examples to all Posterity, and Saints hereafter in Eternall Glory

And thus having clothed you in the Garments of heaviness, and robed your soules with the sable livery of Mourning; I cannot, I suppose, leave you in a better habit, than that of Sorrow; nor in a better Posture, than that of Humiliation; nor in a better Place, than the House of the Lord your God; where if you Cry earnestly, no doubt but he will heare graciously. And so let Lamentation Seale up our Discourse.

Lord Heare our Prayer, and let our Cry come unto thee : A M E N.

F I N I S.
